

10 FREE PLAYABLE DEMOS ONLY WITH THIS MAGAZINE!



PlayStation[®] 2

OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

10
PLAYABLE
DEMOS!
THE BEST DEMOS
GUARANTEED!

EXCLUSIVE!
SPIDEY'S
BACK!

The movie! The game! The cast!
Swing into our 7-page exposé

EXCLUSIVE REVIEW!
ROCKSTAR'S LATEST!
Red Dead Revolver's gritty arcade
action leaves the others for dead!

READ IT FIRST
SPLINTER CELL 2
Sneaky jungle warfare makes
this the spy sim to beat!

SINGSTAR
EAT THIS,
DICKO!

It's fresh! It's hot!
The icebreaker that will
change your lounge room

REVIEWED!

HITMAN: CONTRACTS

The Man in Black returns!
The violent sequel that makes
Manhunt look like the Muppets!



GRAN TURISMO 4

GT4: Prologue reviewed! Get behind the
wheel of the world's greatest racing sim!

INSIDE!

- SOCOM II
- Final Fantasy X-2
- Drakengard
- Onimusha 3
- UEFA Euro 2004
- The Cat in the Hat

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ISSUE 28 JUNE 2004
PRINT POST APPROVED PP: 255003/06871

DERWENT HOWARD



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THE FEAR, THE VIOLENCE, THE HORROR...

The Suffering captures the disturbing and terrifying nature of the horror genre in a compelling third person action horror game set in the mature and gritty world of a maximum-security prison.

"The best horror game ever made?"

86% - PSM2

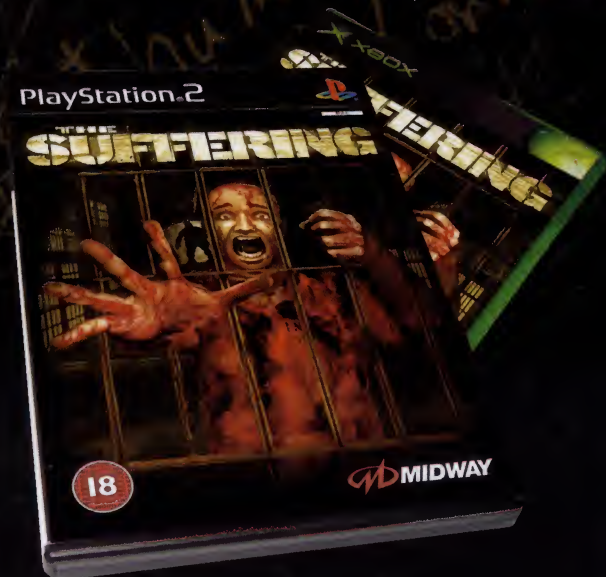
8/10 - Official PlayStation2 Magazine (UK)

8/10 - Official Xbox Magazine (UK)

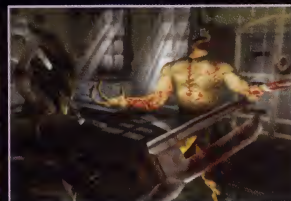
"It will scare the pants off the most hardened gamers"

Anticipation Rating: 9

P2 Magazine



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THE
SUFFERING

PRISON IS HELL



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SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT 2



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WRITE TO

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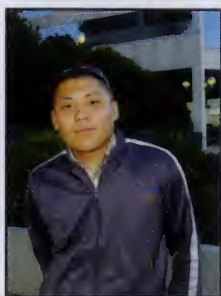
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“No other Aussie games magazine has seen the game yet and you won't be seeing any other interviews with Daniel Gillies, either...”

EDITOR'S LETTER

When the chance came up to put together a Spider-Man issue we naturally jumped at the chance. The OPS2 team has its fair share of comic book nuts and with the massive success of the first movie, we decided that this issue you're holding in your hot little hands was the order of the day.

Again, you can rest assured in knowing that what you're reading won't be found anywhere else. Well, maybe you will – but only when other magazines jump on the bandwagon and re-hash what's written in these very pages! OPS2 has had exclusive access to the game and to the movie. No other Aussie games magazine has seen the game yet and you won't be seeing any other interviews with Spider-Man 2 star Daniel Gillies (as John Jameson), either...

Also this issue, we bring you reviews and features of some hot new games (GT4: Prologue, Smash Court Tennis 2, Hitman: Contracts, SingStar) and also introduce some exciting new ones for the very first time. In particular, we think Destroy All Humans!, Pandora Tomorrow and Death By Degrees are ones to watch.

Stand by next issue for our E3 report where we'll be tipping the year's biggest new games and reporting on all the highly-anticipated games as new details come to hand. OPS2 already has a massive surprise in store, and it's set to make headlines!

And for all you competition junkies out there (we know who you are!) we have loads more games up for grabs! You can either pick yourself up a copy of Disney's The Haunted Mansion by finding our hidden character somewhere in the magazine, a copy of the Aussie-made blockbuster Transformers by subscribing to OPS2 or a new copy of SOCOM II by simply writing in and telling us what "SEAL" is an acronym for. You'll find all the details for these competitions and much more, once you delve deeper. Whatchoo waiting for?!

Richie Young

RICHE YOUNG
Editor

FAVOURITE SUPERHERO?



NARAYAN PATTISON

“Longshot. His ‘super power’ sucks (he can win any bet – no matter how much of a longshot it is) and he's got the worst mullet ever, but he still scored with every hot X-Men babe. Respect.”



TRISTAN OGILVIE

“Thor. He's got blonde hair, blue eyes and he runs all over town swinging his mighty hammer. Which reminds me of me before I got married, except my eyes are hazel green...”



MICHAEL DEVRIES

“Punisher. I can't stand all these pussy super heroes. If the Punisher sees a bad guy he pops a bullet in them before they can say ‘Ueigh, I didn't know my intestines looked like that.’”



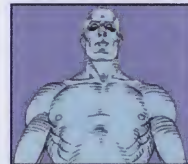
LUKE REILLY

“It has to be Daredevil. A blind lawyer in devil outfit with radar sense and a really bad temper? Now that's original. Dark and violent, the way super heroes should be.”



MICHELLE STARR

“Catwoman. She's sexy, spunky, and she's a cat. Nine lives and extreme acrobatics would sure be a handy thing to have, and when you're done, you can curl up on a rooftop in the sun.”



ED LOMAS

“Watchmen's Dr Manhattan. He can do absolutely ANYTHING, because he can adjust space, time and matter on an atomic level. He's bright blue and rarely even wears underpants.”



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AND YOU COULD WIN A COPY OF THE AWESOME TRANSFORMERS GAME AND THIS RARE ATARI T-SHIRT!

With an Official PlayStation 2 Magazine subscription you can get 12 issues delivered directly to your door for just \$10.41* each. That's a MASSIVE saving of 30% off the regular cover price!

Every new subscriber also goes into the draw to win a copy of Transformers and an exclusive Atari shirt!

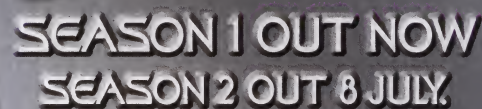
Turn to page 76 for all the details...

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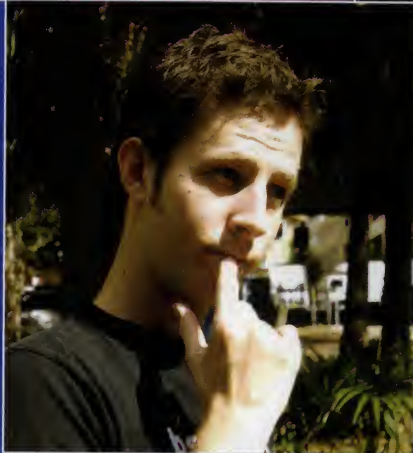


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on the dvd

PLAYABLE DEMOS



Hey – what up, dudes? Yeah, yeah, I hear y'all. Word to yo mamas. We've got a funky playable DVD for you again this month, with a whole bunch of white-hot stuff on it. Last issue's cover game, *Transformers*, is there with a whole level of Aussie-developed robot-crunching goodness for you to check out. Sony's *Rise To Honour* is well worth a go – it's as close to an interactive kung-fu movie as we've ever seen.

A personal favourite is EA Sports' *Fight Night 2004*, which really gives other boxing games a good, hard smack to the chops – the control system takes a while to get used to, but once you do you'll have a blast. Our sneak preview of *Richard Burns Rally* is great, too. Hardcore realism means it's tough, but satisfying when you drive well. Anyway, Ed out, y'all.

Ed Lomas

ED LOMAS
Associate Editor

PS To use this DVD, load it up on your PS2. Then scroll between games and rolling demos with the **↓** and **↑** keys. To choose within a section use **←** and **→**. Press **⊗** to start up your choice. Please note, you may have to reset your PS2 after some demos.

YOUR DISC

Every issue, *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* brings you something no other magazine can – playable demos. Offering exclusive levels, tracks and missions, our playable DVD enables you try the very latest PS2 games before you buy, often weeks, even months before release. Why risk your hard-earned cash on a \$100 game when you can try it out on our cover-mounted DVD? From *GT3* and *MGS2* to *TimeSplitters 2* and *Final Fantasy X-2*, we've always featured playable demos of the games that matter. Throw in top quality video footage of the hits of the future and our DVD is the best bargain on the shelves.

DISC PROBLEMS?

If your disc isn't working properly, simply send it back to this address for a replacement.

Demo Disc Returns

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TRANSFORMERS

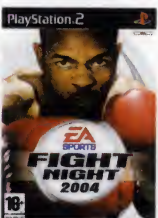


DISTRIBUTOR: **ATARI**
GAME TYPE: **SHOOTER**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**

Check out last month's excellent Aussie-developed cover game for yourself in our exclusive playable demo. The Autobots are trying to track down the powerful Mini-Cons and round them up before the evil Decepticons gets their hands on them. You get to play as heroic Autobot Hot Shot on the Amazon Basin level, with Optimus Prime giving you advice as you destroy evil Decepticlones and search out Mini-Con power-ups. Transform into a speedy sports car whenever you need to get around the area more quickly, and back into a robot when there's some shooting to be done. It really is more than meets the eye.



FIGHT NIGHT 2004



DISTRIBUTOR: **EA**
GAME TYPE: **BOXING SIM**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1-2**

Find out why we reckon this is the best boxing sim yet. You and a friend can put Roy Jones Jr and James Toney against one another for two rounds! Note that the default controls are a little weird so you might want to change them.



TEENAGE MUTANT NINJA TURTLES



DISTRIBUTOR: **ATARI**
GAME TYPE: **ACTION**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**
(FULL GAME 1-4)

This one-player demo contains one level of the game set in the city streets, with Katana-wielding Leonardo as the playable character. Try and string together some huge combos.



RICHARD BURNS RALLY



DISTRIBUTOR: **ATARI**
GAME TYPE: **DRIVING**
OUT: **JULY**
PLAYERS: **1**

Check out the Rally School, where Richard will teach you to do handbrake turns, or have a go at one stage of the Tanner rally. Be careful – one nasty crash can end the race.



SONIC HEROES



DISTRIBUTOR: **ATARI**
GAME TYPE: **PLATFORM**
OUT: **NOW**
PLAYERS: **1**

Our *Sonic Heroes* demo gives you control of Team Sonic on their first mission in Seaside Hill, where you'll need to switch between Sonic, Tails and Knuckles to best make use of their special skills to get past each new obstacle.

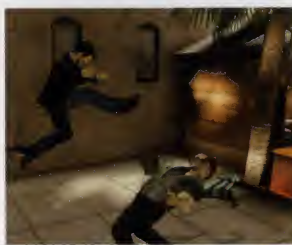


RISE TO HONOUR



DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
GAME TYPE: ACTION
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

Starring kung-fu's main man Jet Li and with awesome choreography by Hong Kong movie director Corey Huen, Sony's cinematic martial arts epic is like an interactive movie. We've got the first section of the game for you to play through, starting with a dramatic chase through the back streets requiring sharp timing, before you get introduced to the various fighting moves as groups of hoods take it in turns to challenge you. Use the right analogue stick to attack in 360 degrees, and keep an eye out for bits of scenery (such as walls) or furniture (chairs are good) that you can use to your advantage.

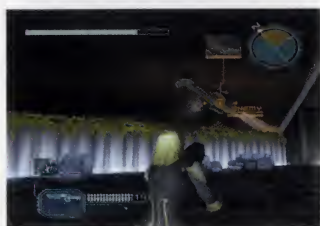


CY GIRLS



DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
GAME TYPE: ACTION
OUT: MAY
PLAYERS: 1

The full game will come on two separate DVDs. Our playable demo gives you a stage from early in Ice's adventure, with plenty of tutorial-style advice being given as you explore an enemy base and learn the various moves and skills.



ARC: TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS

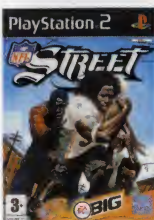


DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
GAME TYPE: RPG
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1

We've featured this demo before, but now there's a longer time limit. Head out of the hut and make your way down to the truck parked on the beach... then you're on your own!



NFL STREET



DISTRIBUTOR: EA
GAME TYPE: SPORTS
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1-2

EA takes a break from serious sims for a friendly game in the park. Our demo features the Kansas City Chiefs and the Philadelphia Eagles in a suped-up, cut-down version of real NFL. Enjoy a whole game and make you pull off some flashy moves for extra respect!



MX UNLEASHED



DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
GAME TYPE: RACING
OUT: NOW
PLAYERS: 1
(FULL GAME 1-2)

Here you get three main modes to check out: Supercross, which puts you in an indoor race in San Diego; Nationals, which has you racing around the open-air Goblin Valley stage; and Freestyle, where you get to explore Montauk Plains area.



REEL FOOTAGE

As well as playable demos, we've got the best videos too!



WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY*

See the ace footie sim in action in this neat bit of footage, backed with some chunky hard rock.

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH

A full movie-like trailer for the latest game set in Sony's EverQuest universe.

*This game is not sponsored, approved of or in any way connected with any person (including, without limitation, players, teams or sporting bodies) other than the England Rugby Team and its associated organizations. Welsh Player names, likenesses and other image rights are used under licence from the Wales Professional Rugby Players Association.

DOWNLOADER

Taking the pain and suffering out of videogaming

ENTER THE MATRIX

Use our save file to hack into the Matrix and give yourself access to every single area.

MOTO GP3

Not happy with the pushbike you're racing with? Our save will give you a big bunch of extras.

MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN

Those blasted clockwork skeletons can get right on your nerves. Open the whole game and avoid them.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

Sam Fisher doesn't like to be told he isn't allowed somewhere. This save gives him access to all areas.

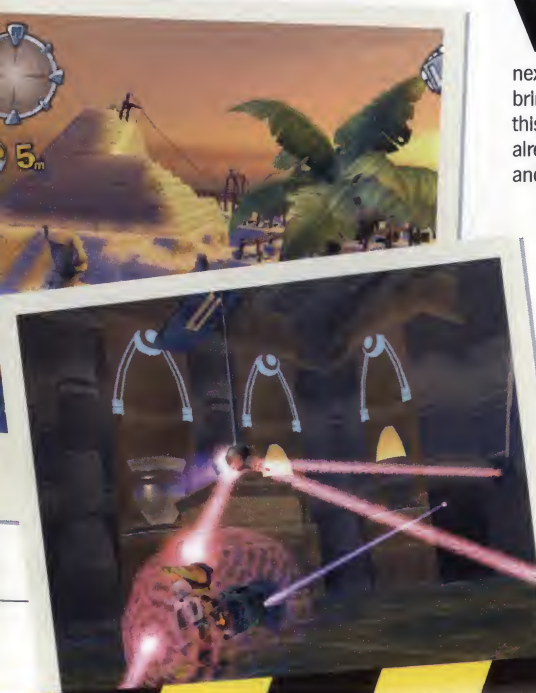
ACE COMBAT: DISTANT THUNDER

Sure, having a collection of Ferraris is impressive, but every jet and every weapon is far cooler.

XIII

We can't give a 'game complete' save, but this one will start you a fair way through the adventure.

EDITED BY ED LOMAS



OPS2 uncovers more big name games – prior to E3!

Needless to say, there are hundreds more games yet to be announced, and the year ahead is shaping up to be the biggest and most exciting yet for the PS2 and PSP. Keep your hats on, and be sure to check out our comprehensive E3 coverage next issue! **—RY**

EYE BELIEVE

EYE SPIES SOMETHING BEGINNING WITH 'S'

Sega unveils crazy new EyeToy line-up

In another big boost for PS2's innovative EyeToy hardware, Sega has announced that top developer Sonic Team is creating *Sega SuperStars*, a compilation of mini-games based on the company's top franchises.

While we're expecting to get a proper look at the game at E3, we have some advance screenshots which show the kind of thing we can expect to be getting up to. One shows a player facing off against *Virtua Fighter's* Akira, another moving Sonic the Hedgehog around the sides of a tunnel while collecting rings, one smacking shambling *House of the Dead* zombies in the face, and another playing musical arcade game *Samba de Amigo* (which was originally controlled with a pair of maracas).

It's looking like a whole lot of sweaty fun, and we'll let you know how it plays once we've had a go for ourselves! Stand by for yet another exciting new EyeToy announcement next issue. **EL**



MOVIE MURMURS

The latest news and rumours in the world of film and DVD



● **IT'S BEEN CONFIRMED THAT MATRIX STAR CARRIE-ANN MOSS** has been cast to play the "unnamed female lead" in the new *Mission: Impossible 3*. While there is still no news on the plot, we do know that she joins a cast that already features Tom Cruise and Ving Rhames.



● **KILL BILL WRITER AND DIRECTOR, QUENTIN TARANTINO**, confirmed in a recent interview with *Rolling Stone* that he's currently in the process of laying down the groundwork for *The Vega Brothers*. The film will be a prequel to *Pulp Fiction* and *Reservoir Dogs* and will feature John Travolta as Vincent Vega from *Pulp Fiction* and Michael Madsen as Vic Vega from *Reservoir Dogs*. QT wants to get the film made now before these guys get any older.

PLAY IT ORC ELSE

RETURN OF THE RING

New RPG set in and around The Lord of the Rings movie trilogy

Now the *Lord of the Rings* trilogy has been made and released and watched thousands of times, what next for fans of Middle-earth? Thanks to EA's keen use of every license it owns, a role-playing game set around the events of all three movies called *The Lord of the Rings: The Third Age* is in development.

According to EA, players will take on the roles of new characters and choose their own path through Middle-earth. You'll form your own party and work through quests which intersect with major events of the film trilogy, such as the encounter with the Balrog in the Mines of Moria or the battle of Helm's Deep. While you'll start on the side of the Fellowship, you'll also be able to unlock the chance to sneak over to Sauron's side. Definitely one to keep a giant, flaming evil red eye on. **EL**



● **AS WE REPORTED IN A PREVIOUS ISSUE**, it seems the next James Bond will be an Australian. Hugh Jackman has dropped out of number one contention with Heath Ledger now odds on favourite. Heath has a few films coming out this year and the success of those will influence whether or not he gets to wear the tux.

● **THE SHIELD STAR, MICHAEL CHIKLIS**, is apparently up for the role of Benjamin Grimm (*The Thing*) in the *Fantastic Four* film, which is due to hit screens next year.

POINT AND CLICK!

THE CRYING GAME

Far Cry Instincts targets PS2

If you've looked up from your PS2 for more than five minutes this year, chances are you've heard of *Far Cry*. It's a frantic shooter with gob-smacking graphics, and best of all, it's coming to PS2 this year in the form of *Far Cry Instincts*.

Anyone concerned that the console game will be a far cry

from the high-end PC version should stop right there. The sprawling 3D environments, explosive weapons, vehicle combat and rocket scientist-smart AI that *Far Cry* is famous for will all be included in the PS2 version. Expect hands-on details next issue. **— NP**

FIRST
LOOK

The PS2 version is being made by the talented *Splinter Cell* team

STARR
REPORT

I'm game if you are...

I've been playing quite a bit of *Soul Calibur II* lately, both in single-player mode and against friends, with beer and pizza and a whole lotta trash talkin'. And who doesn't love a bit of multiplayer fun? Whether it's sports games or karaoke, the enormous potential of gaming as a social vehicle is being realised in a big way.

Console gaming has, since its earliest days, recognised this potential. Not only with multiplayer games themselves, but with kids clustering around watching friends play *Super Mario*, or waiting for their turn at *Street Fighter II*.

Well, social values have changed, and the gaming industry has changed, but the two seem to connect on the same basic level. You'll still find kids playing *Tony Hawk's* (trying to beat each other's high scores) or find yourself competing in a bloodthirsty *Dance Dance Revolution* deathmatch. It's just that the arena – and the scope – have grown.

It's not about bouncing Italian plumbers and pixel kung-fu fighters any more. Instead, you can go head-to-head in an online stealth mission, or join thousands of other gamers in a world of swords and sorcery. Or you can gather a bunch of friends together in your living room for a rowdy "indoor soccer" match.

New inventions such as EyeToy and dance mats are bringing the arcade to your home, and new games like *SingStar* give you the chance to horrify your friends with drunken renditions of favourite songs.

Whatever you're after, the options are endless; and the capacity for fun is enormous.

MICHELLE STARR
Games Writer



TIME TO GET MEDIEVAL

TDK Mediative's new action adventure, *Knights of the Temple*, is set to go ye olde-school. Taking place during the Crusades, you'll control a young Christian named Paul who's having strange visions of a woman in trouble. While it sounds more like a sex dream, there is actually a girl Paul will have to rescue from an evil Bishop who plans on unlocking the gates of hell. A multiplayer mode has also been set in stone where you can go head-to-head with your mate in an arena and fight it to death just like Russell Crowe in *Gladiator*. *KOTT* is expected to get medieval on thine buttocks late this year.

F1 04 ON THE START LINE

F1 fans can rest easy now with the recent announcement from Sony that the only racer officially licensed by the FIA Formula One World Championship will return in 2004. You'll be able to select from all 20 drivers from the 10 official teams and race in all 18 races across four continents and 16 countries including the new Berlin and Shanghai tracks.

SIMPSONS WRITER POWERS
NEW SPYRO GAME

Apparently *Spyro* is everyone's favourite purple dragon, though this is hardly a point many would bother to debate. As to be expected with such semi-successful franchises there's another follow-up in the works, this time called *Spyro: A Hero's Tail*. Developed by the poms at Eurocom, the new *Spyro* promises new features including breath attacks like ice breath, water breath that can obstruct objects and villains, and electrical breath to fry mechanical foes, plus five playable characters. Interestingly, the game will be written by ex-Simpsons and *Futurama* writer J. Stewart Burns.

DIRTY LARRY RETURNS

About 10 years ago, *Leisure Suit Larry* games were the nerd's equivalent of porn. They featured a stout little loser trying to bed anything with boobs and pantyhose. *Leisure Suit Larry: Magna Cum Laude* will star Larry Lovage, nephew of the series' original twonk, Larry Laffer, and will be released on PS2 toward the end of the year. You'll have to woo female characters using a 90,000-word arsenal of recorded dialogue. Packed with enough sexual innuendo to make James Bond blush, the game aims to emulate the crass humour of films like *American Pie*, so expect plenty of corny "cum" jokes.

CORRECTION...

Whoops! In our '101 Greatest Games' feature in Issue #27, it said *Devil May Cry 2* but it should have just said *Devil May Cry*. Sorry!

MOVE OVER GANDOLF

D&D'S BACK!

Exclusive first play of D&D hacker *Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone*

EXCLUSIVE



Chainmail boardshorts make a comeback

Dragon: 1, Man: 0

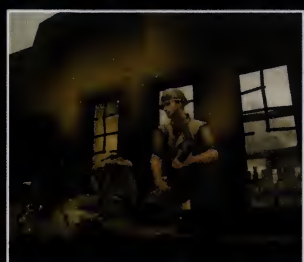
If you thought Stormfront Studios' upcoming *Dungeons & Dragons* game *Forgotten Realms: Demon Stone* would be about inventory management and stats, think again. After going hands-on with some very early code at Atari's offices in Massachusetts we're happy to report that *Demon*

Stone is cast from the same mould as the stunning hack 'n slash *The Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers* game the developer produced for EA. Better yet, it surpasses the Tolkien title.

The visuals are more detailed and smoother than either of the *LOTR* games, boasting more creatures involved in the battles

and a feel that's every bit as epic. More importantly, the D&D setting of the *Forgotten Realms* provides a more diverse mix of monsters to face. Everything from the Yuan-Ti snake-men through to dark elves and dragons await. The only disappointment is a lack of a multiplayer mode. **— DT**

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'FIND HARRY' WINNERS

Thanks for all the entries to our 'find Pitfall Harry' competition in issue 26 – most people correctly spotted him peeking over the top of the motorbike mudguard in the MTX Mototrax review on page 57. A few bright sparks spotted him 'all over pages 54 and 55', and a number of people imagined him in places that he certainly wasn't. But here are the lucky winners of copies of *Pitfall: The Lost Expedition* from Activision:
R Blee VIC, B Lowne VIC, B Polley NT, G Everton SA, J Wilson VIC, M Crass NSW, K Pilson QLD, N Howe TAS

LATEST DEVELOPMENTS

Providing you got this issue quickly, you may still have time to get along to Free Play, The Next Wave Independent Game Developers Conference' in Melbourne. Featuring presentations by some of Australia's top game development figures, Free Play aims to bring together the country's independent game developers, modders and industry enthusiasts to share skills, resources and ideas. It runs from Friday 21st to Sunday 23rd May, and you can find full details on the official website at www.free-play.org

HERE COMES THE PAIN! AGAIN!

Atari has started mopping up the blood, sweat and teeth from *Backyard Wrestling: There Goes The Neighbourhood* to begin work on a sequel to the hardcore grappler. *Backyard Wrestling 2* will feature upgrades in gameplay, graphics and presentation as well as a brand spanking new story-driven career mode. However, it's the news that that *BW2* will be the first to introduce wrestling to the Network Gaming community that has got everyone doing moonsaults. Not only will you be able to go one-on-one with other great ones from around the world but you can add more salt to the wound you've opened with a glass bottle by talking trash through your headset.



UNDERGROUND REVISITED

After selling five million copies of a game in six months can you blame EA for getting started on a *Need for Speed: Underground* sequel? Scheduled for a late 2004 release, *NFSU2* is getting on the free-roaming city bandwagon that's still all the rage. Gamers will be able to explore an entire city that's divided into five separate neighbourhoods, all with their own street racer gangs and rules. You'll likely have to befriend and schmooze with rival gangs in order to get your hands on the hottest street racing upgrades, as well as find out where and when all the big races are going down. Also expect 30 licensed cars and loads more tuning options than before.

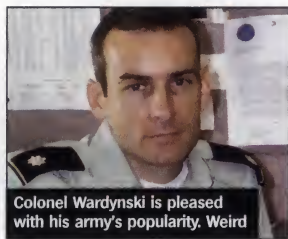
WARZONE

US ARMY AND UBISOFT IN 'FRIENDLY FIRE'

George W isn't the only one in need of some PR

Ubisoft has recently announced to the world that it is joining forces with the US Army – and is to exclusively publish the official US Army game. Interesting news, and it's surely one that will bear fruit for both sides concerned.

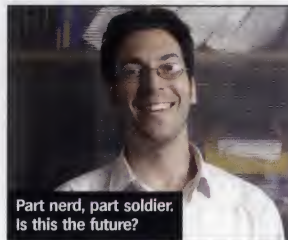
This announcement will no



Colonel Wardynski is pleased with his army's popularity. Weird

doubt result in a solid game full of authenticity and accuracy, and gamers are destined to lap it up when it's released in the middle of next year. *America's Army* will have the genuine artillery, uniforms and military procedures employed by the real thing. The PC version of *America's Army* has already seen 3.3 million players sign up since July 2002 and the popularity of games like *SOCOM* and *Medal of Honor* is testament that war games are hot property.

"We are pleased to be working with Ubisoft to bring the *America's Army* game to console for our Soldiers who are stationed abroad and for our fans



Part nerd, part soldier. Is this the future?

around the globe," said Colonel Casey Wardynski, originator and Director of the *America's Army* game project. Perhaps it's the bad press the war in Iraq has generated, but last time we looked, the US Army was an err... army – not a rock band entertaining its fans! **RY**

WAR-TORN

UP, UP AND AWAY!

Namco reveals new Ace Combat game

The best-selling console flight sim series, *Ace Combat*, is coming back for another shot at PlayStation in the tentatively titled *Ace Combat 5* (although we hear its full name will be *Ace Combat 5: The Unsung War*).

Set in the year 2010, it sees you as a fighter pilot in a squadron formed to protect the nation of Osea against airborne invaders, flying over 50 real licensed planes in high-speed tactical combat missions. One of the main new features is

Wingman Command, allowing you to give in-flight instructions to your squadron, while also listening to their chatter on the radio to keep track of what everyone's doing.

To add to the atmosphere, the storyline is all played out in amazing-looking cut-scenes. Check out our screenshots for the kind of graphical detail you can expect to be enjoying. And just look at the in-flight stuff – it's certainly looking very impressive indeed. We'll let you know how it plays soon. **EL**



**FIRST
LOOK**

Jet: not just an Aussie rock band

THE TOP TEN

CRAPPIEST SUPERHEROES

1. ANT MAN

Shrunk to the size of an ant, Ant Man has a helmet that he uses to control other ants to do his bidding. Dangerous at picnics.

2. SUPERTED

Okay, so SuperTed was cool, but why he had so much trouble with an inept cowboy, a stupid fat guy and a gay skeleton is beyond us.

3. AQUAMAN

Completely useless out of water, he rides a seahorse and has a variety of fish allies. How the hell this guy made it into the Justice League is anyone's guess.

4. FLAMING CARROT

A founding member the Mystery Men, Flaming Carrot's only power was 'Zen Stupidity', the ability to transcend normal thought to commit uncommon acts of bravery.

5. BIRDMAN

He can fly with his solar-powered wings, but he needs to recharge them regularly or they're useless. Not so hot against nocturnal criminals.

6. APACHE CHIEF

When DC Comics realised all their superheroes were white, Apache Chief was one of their answers. Wrong answer.

7. BANANAMAN

Young British lad gets super powers when he eats a banana.

8. CAPTAIN PLANET

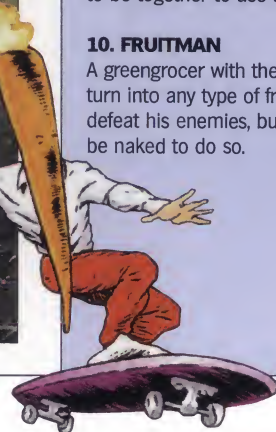
He's a hero who's gonna take pollution down to zero.

9. THE WONDER TWINS

Their powers sucked, they had to be together to use them in.

10. FRUITMAN

A greengrocer with the ability to turn into any type of fruit to defeat his enemies, but he must be naked to do so.



SCREENSHOT OF THE MONTH

Far Cry Instincts is already looking mightily tasty!

This lookout's probably admiring the view from up there... and we don't blame him!

This smoke may look great, but it's bad for your health, as this dude is about to discover...

Expect some stealthy moments as you creep through the long grass with a giant machete

Awesome lighting effects really give you the feeling of creeping around at sunset...



THE YEAR THAT WAS

1985

Each month OPS2 revs up the office time machine and takes you back to yesteryear



Thirteen years after the release of the Atari Pong and other pioneering consoles, the videogame industry began what is commonly recognised as its fourth generation. Established players Atari, Mattel and Magnavox seemed to be playing things cautiously, opting to release slightly upgraded versions of their past consoles, like Atari's 7800, instead of embracing the new technology that had been refined the year before.

Such technological changes included the cost of Dynamic RAM dropping substantially. These new DRAM chips meant games makers could use more memory at a higher transfer rate than the crappy old magnetic disks. Secondly, 8-bit processors had just come out and had caused a reshuffle in pricing, allowing these new components to be considered for mass-market console production.

Which company took advantage of this new technology? New player Nintendo burst into the American market with their hot Nintendo Entertainment System (NES), capitalising on the past technological jumps that the previous gaming giants had not. But retailers were sceptical. In the US, Nintendo had to guarantee that they'd buy back all unbought consoles and games. The gamble paid off with the NES being such a success that retailers couldn't keep up with demand. The iconic Mario Bros and light-gun game Duck Hunt contributed to Nintendo's rapid rise to popularity within the American market.

While nowhere near as successful in the US, the Sega Master System was released just prior to the NES. Its lack of third-party software was one of the primary reasons that it could only muster, at best, 11% of the US market share. It enjoyed substantially better sales and success in Europe, though.

Away from the mass-market hype surrounding consoles, Russian programmer Alex Pajitnov developed a little game called Tetris for the PC. Despite all the hype over the NES titles of the time, it is the humbler Tetris that is still played on handhelds and mobile phones today.



AAARGH! MY EYES!

HAUNTED MAGAZINE

Find Zeke and win Haunted Mansion!

Get the magnifying glasses out again, because it's eye-straining time... This month we've got 10 copies of Disney's *The Haunted Mansion* to give away, to people who can find caretaker Zeke creeping around looking for ghosts somewhere in this issue.

Take a look at this picture of him to the right - that's what you're looking for. Once you've found him (somewhere other this picture to the right), send us an email with 'Haunted Magazine' in the subject line explaining where you found him, with your name, age, phone number and address. Ten lucky, eagle-eyed readers will win copies of the game in return.

Disney's *The Haunted Mansion* from Take 2 is out now. **EL**



WIN!

HOME-GROWN

AUSSIE STAR

Another PS2 blockbuster gets made Down Under

If you had to name the television show that's airing in 60 countries and is currently the number one rating science fiction show in USA, you'd probably guess *Star Trek*, but that enterprise's popularity has receded faster than William Shatner's hairline. *Stargate SG-1* is the new sci-fi monster that's abducting Trekkies by the convention-load. Best of all, a *Stargate* game is coming to

PS2 and it's being made right here in Sydney by Perception.

No details have been announced yet, but considering the show's team features two soldiers with big guns, an alien warrior and a scientist, we're betting it's not going to be a kart racing game. Our money is on an action game featuring hi-tech human weapons, cool alien technology and plenty of body bags to fill. **NP**



It's more than MacGyver in Space, honest

HOW TO ENTER - Send entries to OPS2@derwen@howard.com.au with 'Haunted Magazine' in the subject line or alternatively, send envelopes via snail mail to: Official PlayStation 2 Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Entries should be clearly marked and include: The name of the competition, your name, age, email address, phone number (mobile also) and address. All competitions close 14 July, 2004. This comp is also open to NZ residents.

PS2 TOP 10 GAMES CHART

1



THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN hits the top spot after months in the top 10 – clearly you lot can't get enough of *The Simpsons*, especially when they're combined with *Vice City*-style gameplay like this. Expect to see this selling well for months yet.

2



NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND was last month's number one seller, but drops a place this month. EA's gamble in redesigning the series practically from scratch has certainly paid off, and a big-budget sequel is already in the works.

3



GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY blasts its way back into the top three, as a whole load more people discover the joys of Vercetti thanks to a Platinum re-release. If you know anyone who hasn't played it yet, buy them a copy immediately!

RANK	TITLE	CATEGORY	DISTRIBUTOR
4.	SOCOM: US Navy SEALs	Shooter	Sony
5.	Final Fantasy X-2	RPG	EA
6.	SOCOM II: US Navy SEALs	Shooter	Sony
7.	EyeToy: Play	Party	Sony
8.	Crash Nitro Kart	Racing	Vivendi
9.	SOCOM II + headset	Shooter	Sony
10.	MX Unleashed	Racing	THQ

PS2 RELEASE SCHEDULE

JUNE

Champions Of Norrath	Adventure	Ubisoft
Combat Elite: WWII Paratroopers	Shooter	Acclaim
Driv3r	Driving	Atari
Formula One 04	Racing	Sony
Hack Vol 2 – Mutation	RPG	Atari
Hyper Street Fighter II: Anniversary Edition	Fighting	THQ
MTV Music Generator 3	Music	Atari
Onimusha Blade Warriors	Fighting	THQ
Risk Global Domination	Online	Atari
Samurai Jack	Action	Atari
Shellshock: Nam '67	Shooter	Atari
Shrek 2	Adventure	Activision
Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament 2	Sports	Sony
Syphon Filter: The Omega Strain	Shooter	Sony
X-Files: Resist Or Serve	Horror	Vivendi

JULY

Athens 2004 Olympic Games	Sports	Sony
Catwoman	Action	EA
Crimson Tears	Action/RPG	THQ
Onimusha 3	Action	THQ
Richard Burns Rally	Racing	Atari
Spider-Man 2	Action	Activision

AUGUST

Catwoman	Action	EA
Headhunter Redemption	Adventure	Atari

SEPTEMBER

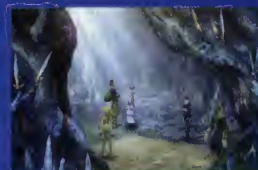
Gradius V	Shooter	Atari
Juiced	Racing	Acclaim
Karaoke Stage	Singing	Atari
Red Star	Shooter	Acclaim
Resident Evil: Outbreak	Survival Horror	THQ
Rhith King	Adventure	Atari
Silent Hill 4	Horror	Atari
Worms Forts: Under Siege	Strategy	Atari

OCTOBER

Trivial Pursuit Unhinged	Online	Atari
--------------------------	--------	-------

OCTOBER

100 Bullets	Shooter	Acclaim
-------------	---------	---------



loading...

SOUNDS SCARY

SILENCE IS BROKEN

Chilling new details on *Silent Hill 4* emerge

O PS2 has heard a lot of strange noises coming out of the room where *Silent Hill 4: The Room* is being conceived. We already know that gameplay will be taken in a new direction with

the introduction of a first-person view for combat, and we know from the screenshots that the monsters you'll face are set to leave players even more mentally distraught than any other survival horror title ever created. But what

we haven't yet seen is how one of the series' strongest attributes – its soundtrack – will collaborate with the scare-fest that will be *Silent Hill 4: The Room*.

After listening to a few of the tracks, we're sorry we asked, because after hearing it with some in-game action, we've been too scared to sleep in the dark. The soundtrack in the original *Silent Hill* was very soft and moody, *Silent Hill 2* took a step forward, adding more of an alternative feel to the soundtrack, and *Silent Hill 3* leaped forward and created music and sounds that could send shivers down your spine.

Silent Hill 4 is set to raise that bar again to even higher levels. While a few of the songs on the soundtrack list may seem like something you could listen to with guests over, others leave you rocking in the corner crying for your mum. **PF**



FORCE YOURSELF

EPISODE III INCOMING

New game preview to come with old movies

Star Wars fans will get more bang for their intergalactic dollar with their purchase of the upcoming original *Star Wars* trilogy box set. One of the special features will be a documentary on *Star Wars Episode III: The Video Game* (as it's currently titled). While we have no idea what will be taking place in the game yet, the Force tells us that it will follow the story of the film closely and will almost certainly feature a playable version of the epic battle between Obi Wan and Anakin that is expected to be such a large part of the movie. While we'd love to believe this is true, we still haven't forgiven it after it told us that we would fall in love with Jar Jar Binks, so we'll have to wait and see. **PF**



RETRO ACTIVE

BACK TO THE ARCADE

Midway Arcade Treasures 2 confirmed

Following the success of the first *Midway Arcade Treasures*, the developer has announced a sequel for the same price of \$39.95. Among the 20+ conversions on the line-up are *Mortal Kombat* 1-3, *Hard Drivin'*, *Pit Fighter*, *Gauntlet 2*, *Primal Rage*, *Rampage World Tour*, *Total Carnage*, *SpyHunter 2*, *A.P.B.*, *STUN Runner*, *NARC*, *Arch Rivals*, and *Cyberball 2072*. Retro-tastic! **EL**



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THE LEGENDARY R-TYPE HARDWARE JUST GOT A WHOLE LOT HARDER

R-TYPE FINAL



'Miss it and you're missing out' **9/10**

EDGE

'Dangerously close to being the best in the genre' **8/10**

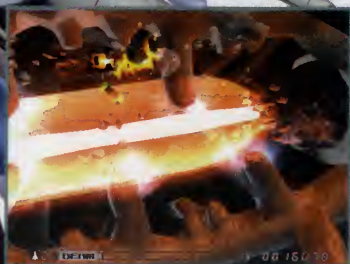


'A thrill-a-nanosecond old skool blaster' **8/10**

PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE

'It's so beautiful it makes us cry' **7/10**

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Email: ops2@derwenthoward.com.au

Paper: OPS2 Feedback, Derwent Howard, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355



AUSSIE RULES XTREME!

G'day Gamers!

I'm not going to start this letter with the usual sucking, 'cause you guys already know that you're all really funny, down-to-earth gamers with the best jobs in the entire known universe.

I just got a copy of your April mag at home (we're a bit slow down here in Tassie) and I was having a bash on Urban Soccer. It inspired me to share with you guys an idea that I've had for a while now – to do for Aussie Rules what NBA Jam did for basketball. How? By making everything huge! I'm talking about stunts so huge, even Darren Eastlake couldn't put enough emphasis on the word. I'm talking huge, humanly impossible marks from the top of three-person stacks; super-sonic torpedo kicks that leave a destructive wake in their paths; alley-oops – a mark and kick for goal in an all-in-one dive; diving tackles, reversals, counter-tackles, all played in an

urban environment with a reduced number of players. What do ya reckon?

By the way, thanks for the great mag – it never fails to get a laugh out of me... oh yeah, and it also provides heaps of useful information. And the DVDs are wicked. And can I work for you guys? I love you.

Terry, Hobart, TAS

PS. If no job, then how about giving me a free game? A free subscription? How about you print my letter and we go from there.

Thanks for your letter, Terry. We agree – it sounds like a great idea! We'd love to see Urban Soccer-inspired damage being inflicted on some AFL identities... Naturally, the world's top games studios read OPS2 religiously, so you never know, a phone call might be just around the corner! Tell you what, have a free game and T-shirt courtesy of Atari, but remember – if your game ever does get made, you have to promise to send us a copy!

DOLBY 5.1 SILENCE

G'day everyone!

The magazine rocks! I currently have a yearly subscription. But the reason I am writing is about game audio. As you know, most good PS2 games that come out have Dolby 5.1 Surround Sound.

Unfortunately, Dolby Surround on games does not work on my amplifier (yes, a Sony amplifier). The only game with surround that works is Vice City, which has DTS surround. I have made sure I have all the right cables, including the digital cable, but Dolby just won't work! Help!

Matt Jessop, Melbourne

PS: Tell more game developers to use DTS...

Unfortunately, Matt, it sounds like your amp simply doesn't support Dolby 5.1 Surround. If you want to play the majority of PS2 games in surround, you need to make sure you get one that's Dolby 5.1 compatible (most of Sony's amps are these days). As you say, some games are made with DTS support, which will work with your amp, but you'll have to stick to stereo with most other titles unless you fancy upgrading your amp, that is...

SUPER STARR

I love Michelle Starr and the Starr Report is the best bit of your mag. I think she's really cool and the best reviewer that you've got. I also think she is totally hot. Can you show a bigger and better picture of her in the mag? I think she should do a centrefold or something. Don't you?

Colin, via email



Did you know that there's a Canadian pro wrestler called Michelle Starr? Honestly! As we don't have any recent pics of our Michelle to show you, here's one of the muscular, bearded Michelle Instead. They actually look remarkably similar...

WHY BOTHER?

Hi everyone at OPS2 magazine, I'm just writing in to let you know how happy I am to read your magazine each month. One thing, however, bugs me. Why do you bother reading the letters? All it is, is people whinging about stuff.

Brock Halliday, via email

So you wrote us a whinging letter to whinge about people sending in whinging letters? Nice one!

ME BIG ANGRY IDIOT!

Elo Elo,

Listen up, I enjoy your mag and all, but what the hell was the go with letting that dumb bastard in OPS2#26 get the winning article? The fool was complaining about the PS2 controller. WHAT THE HELL IS HIS PROBLEM? What an idiot.

Chris, via email

We gave Adam the Star Letter because he actually made a point in his letter (whether you do or don't agree with it) unlike yours! Shout about nothing in particular and your prize is an insult – yours is in the post!

DUAL SHOCK 9000

Hey there!

First of all, great mag. I look forward to every issue. In response to Adam Burgoyne's letter about pad badness, you're too right about the pad – it's way silly to play arcade fighters on. I'd also like to

make a few other changes: in addition I'd like to see the shoulder buttons replaced with two more analogue sticks for ultimate control! I'd like the entire pad to be made out of some sort of putty that hardens with heat so it moulds to your hand when you pick it up, and then hardens so you don't end up ripping it to pieces.

I'd also like to see a drink holder on the front of it so one doesn't need to lose control for refreshment. On top of all this, throw a gyro system into it so all those people who wave the controller around when trying to turn corners in car games actually get something out of their efforts!

Rory Mearns over the ditch, Wellington, NZ

Some nice ideas you've got there, Rory! We'd also like to see a videophone in future pads, a remote control so you can order food from a robotic waiter, and a miniature built-in fan to keep you cool.

MY LIFE IS COMPLETE

G'day guys,

I feel I have made the greatest gaming breakthrough of my life! I have convinced my girlfriend that there is nothing better in the world than PlayStation 2. She is busily fighting her way through the challenges of THUG and complains that the sequel isn't coming out tomorrow! I have created a monster! No more quiet walks in the park, no more candlelit dinners for two. All she wants is home-delivered food and Jak 2! The best thing is she can't get enough of this mag! She actually buys it for me! HOORAY! OPS2, my life is awesome because of you. Never stop!

Gus X, via email

We aim to please, Gus... we aim to please.

NOT GREAT IS STILL GOOD

Dear OPS2,

I've found that most of my friends think that games that aren't as good as GTA, Gran Turismo or Burnout are a waste of space and whenever a not-so-good game comes out they always complain about how crap it is. Like when This Is Soccer 2003 came out they said how bad it looked compared to Pro Evo and FIFA, but I bought it anyway and reckon that it's great.

Nick Sepie, via email

Well, Nick, some people, like yourself, are more appreciative of the qualities and differences in a wide range of titles. Because you put more effort in and try more games out, you're likely to discover gems that your mates (and most of the world) would miss. Just because a game doesn't get a super-high review, doesn't mean it isn't worth playing!

HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-4

DISTRIBUTOR: UBISOFT

DEVELOPER: UBISOFT SHANGHAI

WEBSITE: WWW.PANDORATOMORROW.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS#25

RELEASE DATE: JUNE

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

80%

PANDORA TOMORROW gives fans both the finely tuned single-player mode and the superb online multiplayer as well.

SPLINTER CELL
PANDORA TOMORROW

WHAT'S THE PLOT?



The story kicks off with filthy Indonesian guerrilla leader, Suhadi Sadono, whispering the words "Pandora Tomorrow" into his walkie-talkie. Almost instantly the US embassy in Jakarta gets broken into by a bunch of gun-brandishing militants. Once inside, they round up hostages and go about looting the place for information. It seems they're upset with the US for building a military base in their country. Now when a ruthless military dictator starts threatening the lives of millions of innocents – who you gonna call? James Bond? Solid Snake? Er, maybe, but not this time. Instead you're gonna call Sam Fisher! Unfortunately he's sent in not to save hostages, but to retrieve information – he even stands by and watches hostages get executed. Oh well, we suppose that's how it is in the world of espionage...

X STEALTH SHOOTER

"That's the last 'full moon' joke he'll be making!"



TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL: PANDORA TOMORROW

Back in black! Sam Fisher returns to kick more terrorist rump

Like paedophiles, serial killers, the Gestapo and parking officers, there has been a global consensus that terrorists are fair game when it comes to pouring out our feelings of hate and injustice. Sam Fisher, veteran stealth homeboy for the enigmatic "NSA" of the "USA", knows this and in his first game outing he showed us just how satisfying slaying a bunch of these dopes from the shadows could be. Now the sequel, *Pandora Tomorrow*, is upon us.

Don't be confused folks; this isn't an expansion pack or some other cruddy half-game. It features a completely new single-player campaign and story, as well as – and this is the bra filler – an innovative online multiplayer mode. The graphics too have been given a slight tweak. Not that there was much room for improvement over the original, but some extra performance and effects were required to produce the new range of impressive jungle environments featured in this outing.

From what we've played, fans of the original will find *Pandora Tomorrow* as familiar as their mother's teet. Sam returns packed with his wealth of slick military

gadgets that continue to make Batman's gizmos look like they were pulled from an Easter Show bag. Some new additions to his arsenal are his pistol's laser scope and the very handy flash grenade. *PT* still emphasises silent movement, with Sam tip-toeing through most levels like a husband returning home after a late night of boozing it up with the local bar wenches. He's got a few new moves too, including the SWAT turn which allows him to pivot from cover to cover without being seen, and Upside Down Shooting which allows him to hang from a pipe with his legs and fire on unsuspecting foes below.

The game is set to feature around eight single-player missions set in a wide range of exotic locations. With so much of the game set in Indonesia, there are of course a few exterior jungle sections complete with tall grass that can either be used to hide booby traps from Sam's view, or Sam himself. Our favourite level so far is set in France on a cross-country bullet train. At one point you have to shimmy along the outside of the train, making sure passengers don't spot you, while coping with oncoming trains that rush past and almost smash you to oblivion.

But it's the new multiplayer mode that looks set to make *Pandora Tomorrow* a must-have – provided you've got the whole broadband adapter thing goin' on. It breaks down a little something like this: There are two teams consisting of two players each. One team is two Shadownet spies who play the game from the third-person perspective, almost identically to Sam in the main game. They've got night and thermal vision, have a heap of gadgets, but no bullets – only sticky shockers. The second team is made up of two Argus guards. These guys are played from the first-person perspective, similar to other games like *Medal of Honor*. They have to defend a group of ND133 canisters that the spies are trying to access. While the guards have superior firepower, armed with assault rifles and grenades, the spies have greater awareness and agility. After having a quick test drive of the multiplayer mode we can honestly say that there's never been anything like it before. The action's fun, tense and exciting all at the same time. We can't wait for the game's release so we can take on all you suckers out there waiting for a pants-down pasting. **JE**

Sam can hold his breath to steady the sniper target



Splinty and MGS3 are competing for the most realistic grass awards



Sam can't get enough of taking them from behind



THAT'S HOW YOU DO IT

Want more juicy multiplayer info? At the moment it seems that three different modes will feature in the online shenanigans. First up there's Neutralisation mode. Here the spies need to access one of the ND133 nodes for a set period of time to secure it. Extraction mode is more run-and-gun. Here the spies can grab the ND133 canisters straight away but they've got to make it back to the extraction point with guards in tow. Finally, there's the Sabotage mode. This one's similar to Neutralisation but favours the spies. You've got to acquire a modem, move to one of the ND133 canisters and place the modem nearby. The modem will start counting down and when it reaches zero the canister will be safely sabotaged. At the start you'll find it much easier to get the hang of playing the first-person guards because of the simple 'shoot anything that moves' approach. Once you get to know the maps well though, playing as the spies is great fun.



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1
 DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
 DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
 WEBSITE: WWW.CAPCOM.COM/ONI3
 LAST SEEN: OPS2#25
 RELEASE DATE: JULY

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

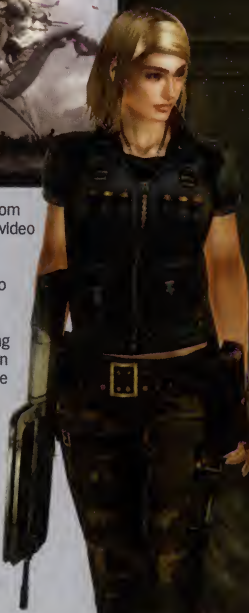
ONIMUSHA 3: DEMON GATE will definitely win fans with its optimised combat controls and brilliant CG sequences.



A TALE OF SOULS AND SHELLACKINGS



As with the previous games, Capcom outsourced the production of the video sequences for *Onimusha 3*. Once more, the considerable talent of ROBOT has been employed, and to dramatic effect. In particular, the introduction movie is spectacular. The Intro fills in the gaps explaining where the first *Onimusha* has been during his absence, and makes the *Star Wars* prequels look like a Saturday morning cartoon. Samanosuke's battles with the other Genma lords are nothing short of legendary, and the direction and choreography of the action will leave fans of samurai flicks rolling around in conniptions. Log on to the official *Onimusha 3* website for a sneak preview, but just make sure you're sitting down when you watch it.



Samanosuke's such a Gauntlet fan he's never seen without a pair



Even the demons like a good mullet



Jacques prepares to carve up some special French Fries



X ACTION / ADVENTURE

ONIMUSHA 3: DEMON GATE

Fight alongside Jean Reno and Takeshi Kaneshiro

It is the year 1582. Lord Nobunaga has mysteriously returned from beyond the grave, and is mounting an assault on the human realm with armies of demons. Though, just as darkness rises, the *Onimusha* warrior Samanosuke Akechi (played by Takeshi Kaneshiro) reappears to oppose Nobunaga's evil plans. After bravely fighting off a demon attack, Samanosuke is ambushed with dark magic that banishes him from feudal Japan, and sends the samurai to modern-day France, only to find it under attack by Genma demons. Upon his arrival, the *Onimusha* briefly encounters French Army officer Jacques Blanc (played by Jean Reno), before Jacques succumbs to the same accursed magics, and is whisked away to Japan circa 1582, as if to maintain some mystical equilibrium. Scattered across time, two men must oppose the Genma forces.

With Jacques having the Ogre Gauntlet thrust upon him, he gains the power of the Oni, just like Samanosuke. Unlike the first *Onimusha*'s more conventional blade weapons, Jacques' arsenal consists of flexible weapons, much like the whip/sword wielded by Ivy from *Soul Calibur II*. With judicious use of charge attacks, Jacques can lasso his enemies and cap them

from point blank range with his sidearm while they're ensnared or hurl them around and knock over other approaching foes. The flying Frenchman can even swing across gaping chasms and hoist himself onto rooftops, making him far more manoeuvrable than the samurai, and more versatile at getting to distant foes.

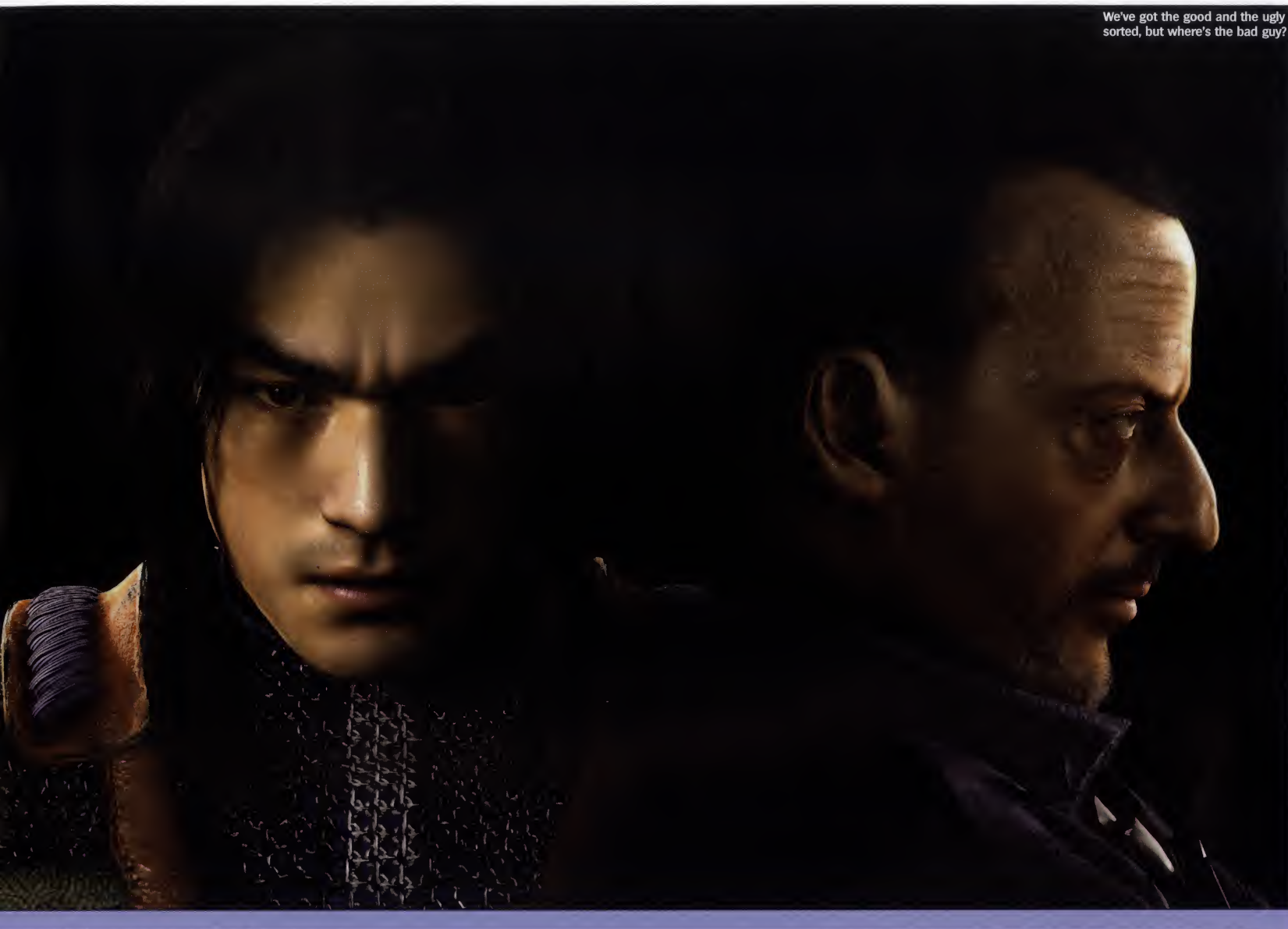
To assist the *Onimusha* on their quest, the Ogres have seen fit to dispatch the fairy Ako. Ako serves several purposes in the game. Firstly, she acts as a targeting indicator to show which Genma is going to become intimate with the pointy end of your weapon next. With her tiny frame and ability to fly, she can also retrieve useful items from otherwise unreachable locations. Last, but not least, Ako's innate ability to time travel allows her to act as a guide for both Samanosuke and Jacques, and even ferry important items between them.

Much like its sister series *Resident Evil*, *Onimusha* has finally adopted an analogue control system, which makes for more fluid play. There are other refinements including more accessible missile weapons. All told, it makes for a more intuitive feel to combat and should make the latest *Onimusha* game easier to get into for gamers new to the series.

If you're planning on playing through the first two *Onimusha* games, then you'd best do it while there's still time before *Demon Gate* is released locally, because once you've been treated to sweet visuals like these, you'll never want to go back. Gone are the days of pre-rendered backgrounds – everything is in three glorious polygonal dimensions and pieced together with crisp, high resolution textures, with a superb camera that follows the action precisely. Environments are littered with detail, like lush foliage in rainforests, puddles that reflect and ripple as characters move through them and numerous fog and lighting effects. Battling Genma is much like a fireworks display, with showers of sparks as blade meets blade and flashes of weapon trails follow each sword stroke. Character models are intensely detailed, right down to the bags under Jean Reno's eyes.

The development crew at Capcom of Japan has really squeezed the PS2 for all it's worth, with more enemies on screen than ever before and battles quite often involving up to a dozen combatants. Fortunately, you're not always alone in battling the demons, as often computer-controlled friendly units will assist in your fight against the non-stop waves of bad dudes. **A. NO**

We've got the good and the ugly sorted, but where's the bad guy?



THE GUYS BEHIND THE GUISE



TAKESHI KANESHIRO has made a name for himself over the last decade in eastern theatre as a very versatile actor. His boyish good looks have earned him a modelling career on the side, as well as several endorsements including motor vehicle manufacturers and fashion labels. Recently, he starred in the stylish action movie *Returner*, which saw Takeshi saving the world from a future of alien enslavement.



JEAN RENO is a 25-year veteran of acting. Though he rose to fame in France, Jean has starred in numerous Hollywood movies, such as *Ronin*, *Mission: Impossible* and *Rollerball*. If not for his commitments to filming *Godzilla*, Jean would have been cast in the role of Agent Smith in *The Matrix*. 'Monsieur Anderson... welcome back'

HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY

DEVELOPER: NAMCO

WEBSITE: WWW.NAMCO.COM

LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: CHRISTMAS 2004

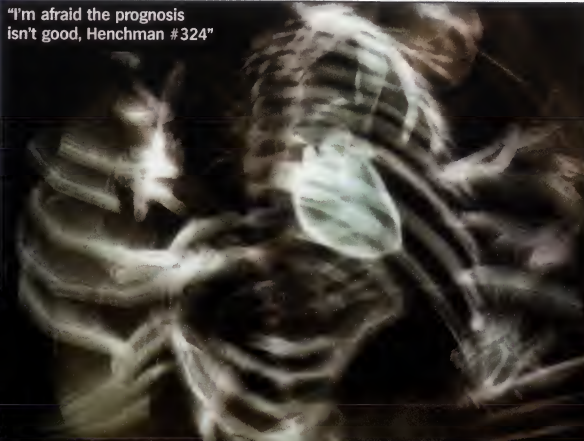
PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

30%

DEATH BY DEGREES looks like one of the more promising titles set for 2004 – who doesn't love a blonde babe kicking arse?

DEATH BY DEGREES

"I'm afraid the prognosis isn't good, Henchman #324"



Check out Nina's new sneakers with lights in



Athens' "custom-built" Olympic gymnastics mall



9am: Nina waits impatiently for the bar to open

ACTION

DEATH BY DEGREES

Tekken's ass-kicking assassin Nina Williams gets her very own adventure

Fans of Namco's *Tekken* series are in for a real treat – in fact, it might be safe to say that everyone is. The beautiful blonde amnesiac assassin Nina Williams is set to star in her very own action-adventure title. And boy, does she look the vixen. But aside from Ms Williams' obvious charms, the game looks like it could be pretty nice piece of work all round.

The story tells the tale leading up to Nina's involvement in the first Iron Fist Tournament. Imprisoned on board a luxury cruise liner, Nina's mission is to infiltrate and investigate terrorist organisation Kometa by entering and winning (ooh, what a surprise!) an underground fighting tournament – to reveal a possible global conspiracy. But we'll also get an insight into Nina's personality as she confronts her own dark demons.

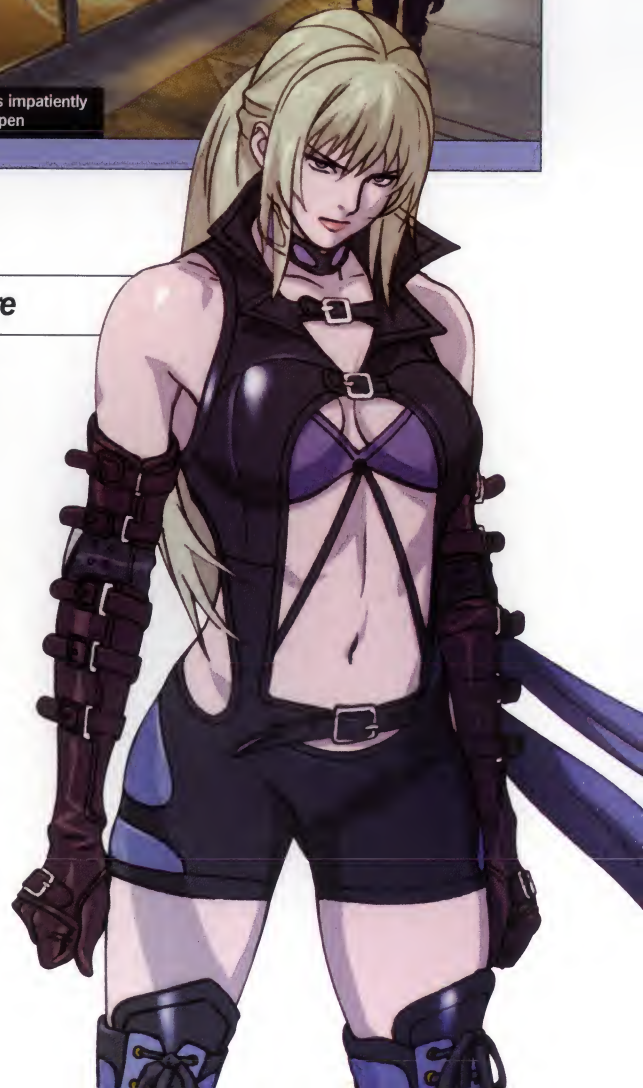
The gameplay will combine some of the more familiar *Tekken* elements with some pretty cutting-edge adventure ingredients. Of course, a number of Nina's signature *Tekken* moves – such as Evil Mist and Submission – will be available during hand-to-hand combat, but the game will also feature a new, 360-degree control system, using the left analogue stick for movement and the right analogue stick for attacking, with secret techniques to be unlocked, and potentially

hundreds of moves to be learned. But it's not all about hand-to-hand combat; you'll also have a very nice arsenal of weaponry at your disposal.

The most unique of Nina's new abilities is the "Critical Hit" targeting system. This nifty little feature allows you to use an onscreen X-ray to target your opponents' bones and specific internal organs!

There will also be a very strong espionage element in the game, requiring Nina to sneak around behind enemies and around corners, using sleeper holds to dispatch guards and tricky evasion manoeuvres to get by undetected. Happily, there will be plenty of scope for no-holds-barred arse-kicking, utilising Nina's impressive acrobatic and bare-handed fighting techniques, and an exciting array of melee weapons and – hooray! – firearms, all over detailed environments such as a weapons research facility, a perplexing prison, and the aforementioned cruise liner.

It's still early days yet, but Namco says there'll be loads of unlockables including Anna Mode, Challenge Mode, Sniper Mode, Hover-Camera Mode and Puzzle Mode. It looks like *Death by Degrees* will be more than just an afternoon's break from *Tekken*-ing for the lovely Nina. And keep your eyes peeled for Heihachi. **MS**



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: VIVENDI UNIVERSAL

DEVELOPER: BLACK OPS

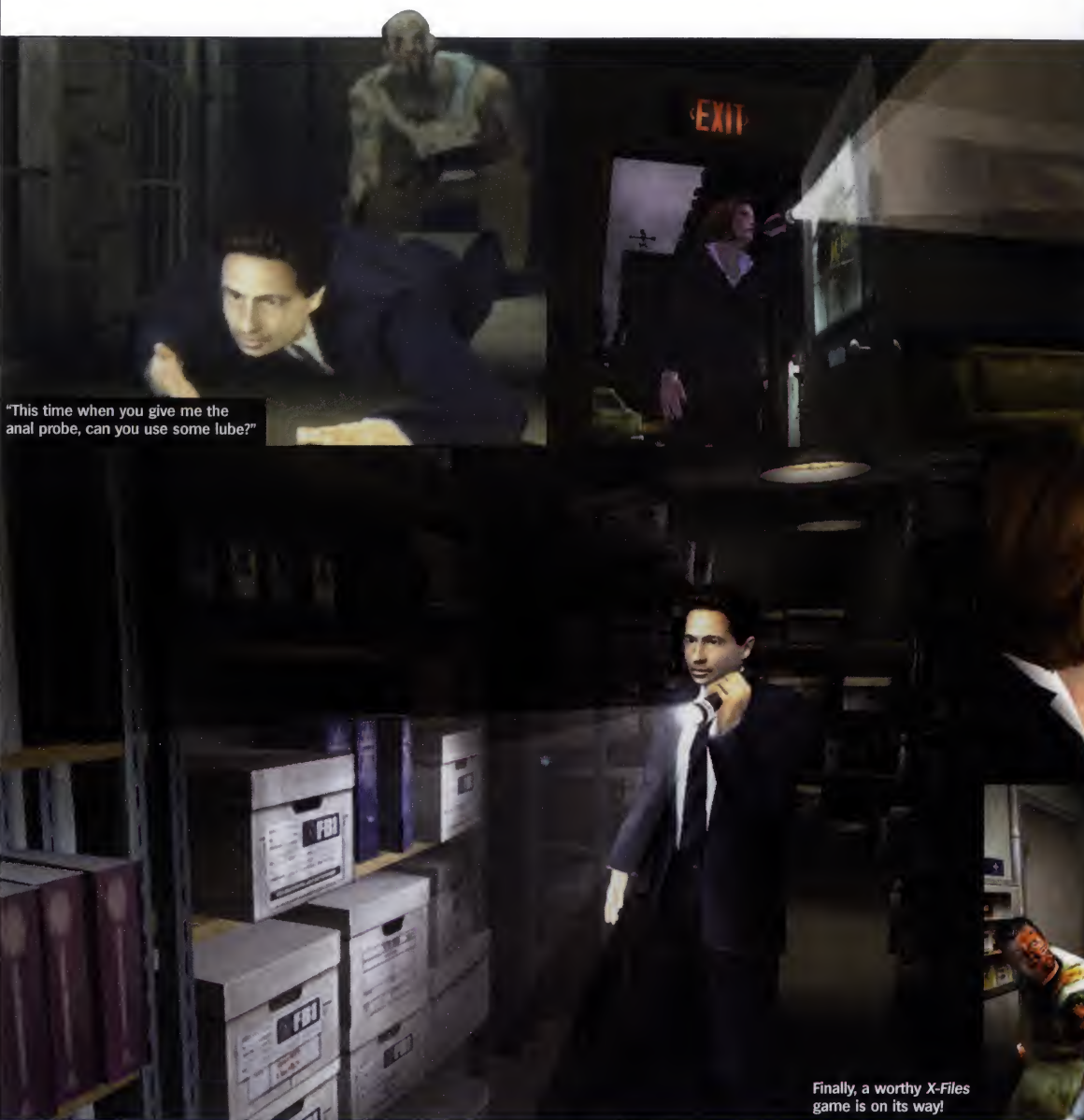
WEBSITE: THEX-FILES.VUGAMES.COM

LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: JUNE 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE is shaping up to be a pretty serviceable addition to the survival-horror genre.



"This time when you give me the anal probe, can you use some lube?"

"Sorry Scully, I honestly thought they were airbags"

Finally, a worthy X-Files game is on its way!

X SURVIVAL-HORROR

THE X-FILES: RESIST OR SERVE

We want to believe...

This is not the first time *The X-Files* have come to gaming. The PSone title bearing the classic series' moniker was a point-and-click mystery game, where gamers could play as neither Mulder nor Scully. This met with poor approval and the game disappeared as mysteriously as it arrived...

All that, however, is about to change. It seems someone's now got the right idea, and decided that *The X-Files* just might work as survival horror game.

The X-Files: Resist or Serve will be set in between the sixth and eighth seasons of the show, beginning with Agents Fox Mulder and Dana Scully travelling to a small Colorado town named Red Falls to investigate reports of paranormal activity. Of course, there's much more going on beneath the surface, and over three scripted episodes, you will have to make notes, gather clues and evidence, and dispatch the occasional zombie/clone/alien.

Your progression through the game will vary depending on whether you choose to play as Scully or Mulder. True to the series, Mulder will be the target of enemy manipulations, which results in a game experience bordering on the surreal. Scully, who is more logical, will have a more straightforward scenario.

Puzzles and monster-killin' for both agents are pretty much the same, involving combing areas for items and clues and shooting up baddies with your handguns.

Yes, you will notice gameplay similarities to the *Resident Evil* series. Quite strong ones, actually. While *The X-Files: Resist or Serve* is looking pretty funky in its own right, it's a shame that it seems to be borrowing some of the more irritating elements from *Resident Evil*, and leaving some of the better ones alone. For example, the camera angles are fixed, meaning you can't move the view around yourself. Sure, it's cinematic, but it can get frustrating at various points.

But *X-Files* fans will hardly notice. *The X-Files: Resist or Serve* features faithfully rendered (if a little wooden) face maps for Scully and Mulder, plus a cast of original voice-actors including Skinner, The Cigarette-Smoking Man and The Lone Gunman. Additionally, the game has been written by TV series writer Tom Schnauz. Top it all off with original series' music and credits, and a DVD-type user interface with commentary and interviews from the cast and directors, as well as galleries, and what we're looking at should be a treat for anyone who ever loved *The X-Files*. **A- MS**

DUDE... THAT LOOKS LIKE YOUR MUM...

Scully and Mulder approach the problems set in the game in different ways – Mulder through intuition and belief, and Scully through commonsense and scientific analysis. Some of Scully's puzzles involve, among other things, mixing antidotes to various toxins and performing autopsies. It sounds gruesome? Well, it is a little... you will be responsible for guiding the scalpel over the corpses' torsos, and you'll get to listen while Scully catalogues the contents of what she finds therein (last meal: pepperoni pizza – yum!). It makes for an interesting diversion from the usual puzzles you find in this genre, especially considering that, while Mulder is the cool dude, we certainly don't see HIM carving up any dead bodies... now do we?



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ

DEVELOPER: PANDEMIC STUDIOS

WEBSITE: WWW.THQ.COM

LAST SEEN: OPS2#27

RELEASE DATE: FEBRUARY 2005

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

50%

DESTROY ALL HUMANS! lets you be a troublemaking alien unleashed on Planet Earth. It will be hard for this to be anything but a classic!

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!



Outside OPS2 Towers right after Narayan's digested lunch



X THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

Way hipper than Third Rock From the Sun



Who shot JFK? Crypto did, of course!



Luckily this car has Pedder's suspension

DESTROY ALL HUMANS!

...starting with the cast of Popstars Live!

Anybody who's seen Tim Burton's *Mars Attacks!* will instantly identify with the type of satirical humour that *Destroy All Humans!* is going for. The game is presented in an authentic 1950s sci-fi style and is packed with flying saucers, ray guns and most likely more than one cow abduction joke. Yes, it's the mystery game that we exclusively "revealed" in last issue's 'Screenshot Of The Month' in Loading...

You play the role of Crypto, an alien warrior sent to Earth by the Furon race in order to clear the way for an impending invasion. To do so you must infiltrate humanity, control them, harvest their brain stems and ultimately destroy them all.

The developers have dubbed the style of the game "Grand Theft Alien", and with good reason. The five Earth-based environments are expansive and densely populated with people, animals and vehicles. You've got complete freedom in deciding to either take the form of a human or animal (by first scanning their DNA and using it to morph your own appearance) and bring the feeble humans down in a subtle manner, or take to the skies in your UFO and level buildings with a variety of intergalactic weaponry.

Crypto has plenty of alien abilities that you can

employ in your efforts to take over the planet, from simple hypnosis and mind reading to body snatching and various other uncomfortable abduction methods. There's a pretty hefty arsenal of guns for your little green man too; a couple that OPS2 witnessed were a "heat ray" that fried targets into charred skeletons which then crumbled into dust, and a "tractor beam" style weapon that allowed you to grab hold of people, animals and cars and fling them around in the air.

However, your human prey won't all be doe-eyed pacifists, and there are two forces on Earth determined to prevent the fall of humanity. "Majestic" is a secret government agency that is covering up the rumours of flying saucers and alien invaders. The Military are exactly the opposite, actively seeking open confrontation with you whenever possible. Your only course of action is to kill indiscriminately – there will be no survivors!

Though your methods and morals in the GTA series and *True Crime* are often questionable, you're still ultimately seeking some form of justice. In *Destroy All Humans!* your aim is total human genocide. It definitely looks to be a breath of fresh air for the genre, and could possibly achieve global domination when it launches its attack on the world's gamers next year. **TO**

THE AUSSIE INVASION



While Melbourne House has been up to its collective ears in Autobots and Decepticons down in Victoria, Pandemic Studios in sunny Brisbane has been hard at work plotting the invasion of *Destroy All Humans!* Pandemic first became aware of Australia's considerable pool of game development talent through its relationship with a group of Australian programmers who worked with the company on several of their early titles in Pandemic's LA Studio. Two of these ambitious lads, Andrew Payne and Adam Iarossi, moved back to Australia and teamed up with veteran game developer Brendan Andrews to form Pandemic Studios Australia. Their first PS2 outing was the positively anal-probing *Army Men: RTS*, but don't hold that against them!

HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1-4
 DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
 DEVELOPER: SONY
 WEBSITE: WWW.PLAYSTATION-EUROPE.COM
 LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
 RELEASE DATE: JULY 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

70%

ATHENS 2004 might overpower the competition, becoming the console's premium party button-masher of choice.

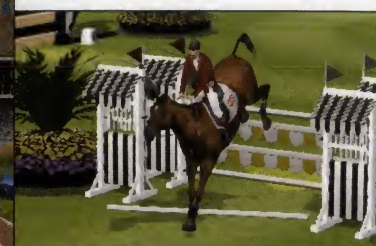
ATHENS 2004



Buttcks inspections are a controversial new qualification requirement for Athens



X SPORTS SIM



ATHENS 2004

On your marks. Get set. Mash!

Every four years there's a big song and dance over a fortnight of sport. Some obscure tournament brings together a hodgepodge of international folk who don't have real jobs and pits their physical skills against each other in a bid to distribute heavy necklaces to the victors.

Sony, being the shrewd marketer that it is, has quickly nabbed the official license. From an early build we played it seems to be coming along far better than the real Olympic stadiums in Athens.

Sony's doing a bang-up job with the amount of events it's jamming into the game. As opposed to limiting itself to the standard 8-10 events like other sports-mashing games, Sony has raised the high-jump bar and is whacking in over 25 events spread over multiple athletic disciplines like track, field, swimming, gymnastics, archery and even shooting.

Events like the high jump require you to perform perfectly timed button presses, while Archery requires you to judge wind speed and direction. Swimming is an interesting one. Not only do you have to control your stroke speed with some button-pulping, you've also got to monitor your oxygen intake or you'll wind up sinking faster than Burt Reynolds' acting career.

The game's presentation deserves a gold medal. Just before lurching into a pole vault, you'll be able to see your character's eyes canvassing the stadium while they acknowledge the roaring applause and no doubt worry about "poling" themselves in front of a global audience. Depending on the event, you won't be limited to a single camera angle either, but instead be able to switch between a handful of views – including first-person.

Of course no one buys these games to beat their own times. This is group game about sharing around multiplayer love via emotionally bruising insults and hurtful taunting. The magnanimous spirit of the Olympics is for the real deal only. Currently the game supports four players, but there's a special Challenge mode that allows a bunch of friends to play through all the events back-to-back. So you'll be able to race the freestyle then the butterfly, then the backstroke and finally finish up with the breaststroke to see who's the real super fish.

But wait, there's more! If you've got some dance mats handy you can use them in the specially designed Party mode instead of your boring old controllers. We're not sure how many people out there have four PS2 dance mats lying about, but those who do will be in for a guaranteed gut-buster of a night. **JE**



HANDS-ON

PLAYERS: 1

DISTRIBUTOR: EDGE OF REALITY

DEVELOPER: ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO

WEBSITE: WWW.SHARKTALE.COM

LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK

RELEASE DATE: LATE 2004

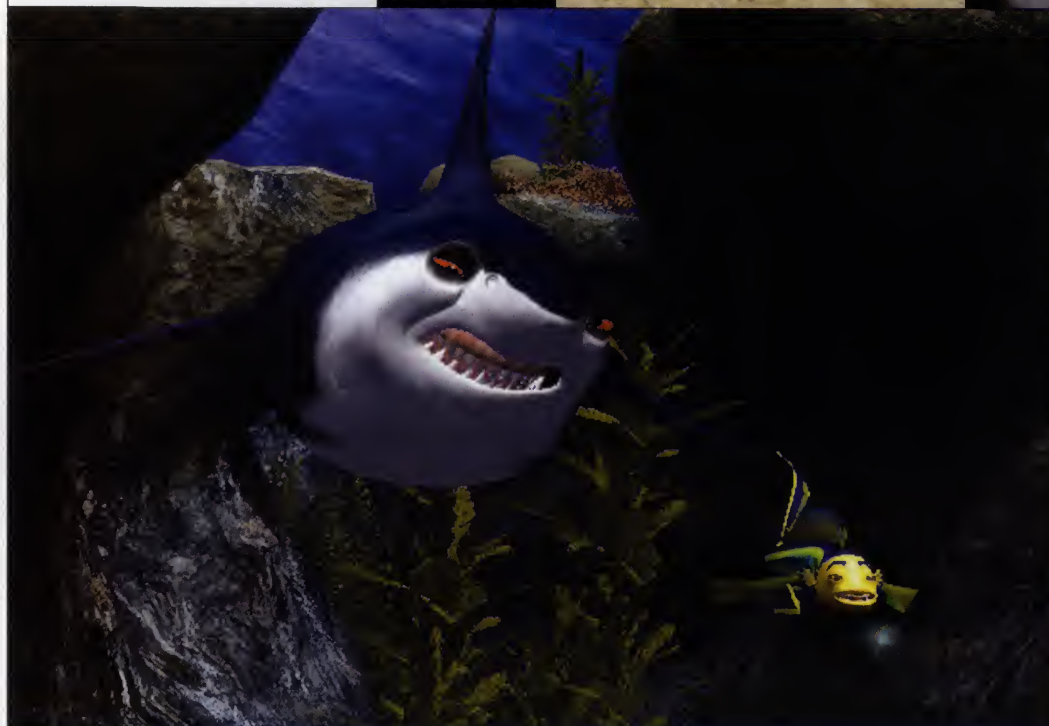
PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

60%

DREAMWORKS' SHARK TALE could entertain, unlike the sketchy *Finding Nemo* game! We've got our fins firmly crossed.



"P.I.S.C.E.N.E, find out what it means to me!"



X ADVENTURE



DREAMWORKS' SHARK TALE

There's something fishy about this movie-based aqua-adventure

The movie business is a strange one. One can only imagine the disappointment of the *DreamWorks' Shark Tale* crew when they found out about *Finding Nemo*. "Pixar are making an underwater film too? Finding who? And it's about fish? Crap!" We imagine the pained cries of animators were along those lines after realising they were beaten to the pinch. But as they say, the show must go on. Later this year, once everyone's had their share of the *Shrek* sequel, filmgoers will be able to see *Shark Tale* in all its undersea glory. All jokes aside, while it will suffer inevitable comparisons to the Pixar production, *Shark Tale* really is a different kettle of fish altogether.

But onto the topic at hand. As is the trend, any movie worth its sea-salt these days needs a game behind it, and thus the good people at Activision are bringing us *DreamWorks' Shark Tale*, an underwater adventure of whale-sized proportions. The game will trace the exploits of a fish called Oscar, a fast-talking, streetwise hustler with huge dreams and a knack for getting himself into hot water. Details on the film's plot aren't exactly abundant at the moment but players can expect a range of gameplay styles to keep them busy, all inspired by the movie. Oscar will go from cleaning Moby at the local

'Whale Wash', racing through a Manhattan-style reef city on the back of a taxi fish, getting into some fisticuffs with a shark, avoiding his boss's Rastafarian jellyfish henchmen Ernie and Bernie and setting the sidewalk on fire with a little *Saturday Night Fever* action. The dancing stages look intriguing, with rhythm-based button-pressing the order of the day. Believe us, you haven't seen it all until you've seen a digital fish getting down with his bad self to the classical strains of MC Hammer's "U Can't Touch This". All of these elements will be more than just mini-games; they'll each be essential parts of the main story mode.

The development team spent a month on site with DreamWorks to perfect the visuals and with a rare degree of access to all manner of film assets, Edge of Reality has managed to create a unique visual style that will remain true to the appearance of the movie itself. Even at this stage the lighting effects look particularly nice, and although some of the characters look like the fish John West rejects, they're not without their charm.

We'll bring you up to speed as soon as we land ourselves a playable version of the game. Here's hoping it's a keeper, or else we might just have to kiss it and throw it back. **LR**

GONE FISHIN'

DreamWorks has secured a truly A-list cast for their upcoming underwater flick. Ex-Prince of Bel Air Will Smith will lend his vocal chords to Oscar and Robert De Niro will voice Don Lino, a mob shark trying to extend his operations. Other talent includes Angelina Jolie, Renée Zellweger, Jack Black, Martin Scorsese and Peter Falk. When one of Don Lino's sons meets his end courtesy of a large anchor, Oscar senses a way out of his dull job at the 'Whale Wash' and claims responsibility for his death, becoming an instant hero. Insert conflict here, Insert resolution here. Sounds fairly bog standard but at least it'll be better than *Matrix Revolutions*.



NEW SCREENS & INFO

PLAYERS: 1-4
 DISTRIBUTOR: ACTIVISION
 DEVELOPER: RAVEN
 WEBSITE: WWW.RAVENSOFT.COM
 LAST SEEN: FIRST LOOK
 RELEASE DATE: LATE 2004

PERCENTAGE COMPLETE

65%

X-MEN LEGENDS could be the game that Marvel fans have been waiting for after wading through way too many half-arsed brawlers.

X-MEN



X ACTION RPG

X-MEN LEGENDS

X-Men fans should be X-static about this X-tremely X-citing little number

There's been a handful of X-Men games released over the past few years ranging from the slightly above average *Wolverine's Revenge* on PS2, to the decidedly below average *Mutant Academy* games back on PSone. Some people might go so far as to say the X-Men lost their PS2 cred when Hugh Jackman was used on the cover of *Wolverine's Revenge* but the voice was actually done by Mark Hamill, and the last decent thing he did was *The Empire Strikes Back*. But after seeing *X-Men Legends* in action, *OPS2* is proud to announce that the long wait for a decent X-Men game may soon be over.

X-Men Legends will be the first of its kind – an action RPG featuring all your favourite X-Men. Shown behind closed doors at last year's E3, Raven has made huge progress with the game. Players will be able to control a team of four X-Men in real-time. There'll be no geeky turn-based shenanigans in this game; just balls-out super heroic action on a grand scale. You'll be able to control any member of your team at any time, and switch between them at will. The battles look extremely intense, with multiple enemies on screen along with your four X-Men. Some seriously spunky special effects really do justice to each of the characters' special moves and

powers. Wolverine can launch into berserker fury, Storm can conjure hurricanes and Nightcrawler can use his teleporting skills to wreak havoc among a group of opponents. The latter is by far the most impressive we've seen, as Nightcrawler can quickly 'bamf' around the room delivering his unique form of punishment with extreme prejudice. There will be 15 playable characters in all, including Wolverine, Storm and Nightcrawler, along with Cyclops, Gambit, Iceman, Jean Grey, Beast, Colossus and Magma. Hailing from the New Mutants, Magma will be the central character in *X-Men Legends*. Magma isn't as well known as some of the high profile X-Men, but this has allowed Raven to really develop the character. With support from Marvel, Raven has been able to take some liberties and give Magma her own unique history.

The RPG element will be very robust, allowing players to unlock various upgrades and powers for each character. There will also be a two-player co-op mode and a four-player skirmish mode, so if you have less than three friends start looking for more now.

Don't be afraid of the letters R, P and G, because this looks like it'll be the best of both worlds; a strong role-playing game with potent real-time action that'll please even the most casual actioneer. **LR**

THE X-FACTOR

Spread throughout each level are "Extraction Points". Here you'll be able to change the dynamic of your team and revive any characters you might have lost along the way. Not only will there be plenty of puzzles to solve in each level, there'll be multiple solutions too. If you arrive at a wall blocking your path, a number of X-Men may have the answer to your problem. Colossus could use his strength, Wolverine could use his claws, or Nightcrawler could teleport to the other side and try to find another way through. Don't think you have the X-Man for the job? Return to an extraction point and grab a few who'll be able to help out. With 15 different characters to choose from, lack of variety certainly doesn't look like it'll be an issue.





WORDS: LUKE REILLY

SECOND COMING

Does whatever a spider can? You better believe it

There's a whole bunch of reasons why Spider-Man is one of the coolest super heroes ever created. One, he doesn't wear his underpants on the outside.

Batman may have a bigger tool belt than Jamie Dury, but there's no excuse for showing that much Y-front in public. Admittedly, Spidey is clad entirely in lycra, but then again, so are Romanian weightlifters – and those guys could tear off your arms and beat you to death with them, so we'll let that slide.

Two, the way he swings through the air launching off buildings, slingshotting around flagpoles and

generally doing whatever a spider can, tend to look a darn sight better than the last time you tried to negotiate a set of monkey bars. Thirdly, the web-slinger's exploits make for a damn good game. And damn good games are what we're all looking for.

After the ridiculously large success of the original *Spider-Man* back in 2002, a follow-up was as certain as Courtney Love embarrassing herself in public again. You don't need spider sense to work out that *Spider-Man 2* will be rewriting the cinema record books very soon, and as a result, the game may well be one of the biggest ever launches for Activision. The previous

game was a great play, but it wasn't perfect. Now honestly, they could have redesigned the levels, polished up the graphics and slapped a \$100 price tag on it and made a proverbial pantload. However, the lads have actually done quite the opposite, entirely revolutionising the super hero experience, and it looks set to be the closest possible experience to being the amazing Spider-Man without the fear of being chased down with a can of Mortein.

FREEDOM FOR SUPER HEROES!

Spider-Man 2 will be the first free-roaming super hero adventure on PS2. Picture Tommy Vercetti in a better outfit





and a hell of a lot of rope and you're on the right track. Instead of resting on its laurels, developer Treyarch went straight back to the drawing board.

"We're definitely moving forward in the direction of making the game bigger. After the first movie, everyone was really impressed with the swinging and everything Spider-Man could do.... It kind of seemed like a lot of controlled chaos where Spider-Man is learning how to swing, barely being able to control himself while he travels around the city. So with that same concept we went back and we started conceptualising what we could do here and what we could do with this videogame," explains associate producer Juan Valdes. "So basically the main concept that came out was a go anywhere, do anything, free-roaming



Everyone avoids CityRail whenever they can

"EVERY BUILDING, FLAGPOLE, TREE AND STREETLIGHT IS A WAY OF GETTING AROUND"

super hero world set in Manhattan. It's the first of its kind."

Although *Spider-Man 2* may resemble its predecessor in a number of ways, rest assured it's a different beast altogether. Everything that just wasn't right about the last *Spider-Man* game has been removed, and promptly taken out the back for a thorough beating. The invisible ceiling that Spidey used to swing around the city? Gone. The height restriction that ended your mission if you got a little too low? Gone. Running out of web at the most frustrating point possible? Gone. Treyarch has really gone all out to

deliver the most authentic Spidey experience ever.

Now we're pretty sure people must be getting tired of every vaguely free-roaming game getting compared to *Grand Theft Auto*. That said, *Spider-Man 2* has more than a few things in common with Rockstar's bad boy. *Spider-Man 2* takes place in a massive living city, a faithful recreation of Manhattan complete with a host of key landmarks like the Empire State Building, the Statue of Liberty, Central Park and Times Square. The maze of streets is teeming with cars and pedestrians and the skyline is peppered with hundreds of buildings and skyscrapers. Treyarch has created a staggering world – a virtual playground where every single building, flagpole, tree and streetlight is far more than just eye candy – it's a way of getting somewhere else.

The level of freedom in *Spider-Man 2* is unlike anything yet seen. Allow us to break it down for all you true believers. If you can see it, you can swing off it, crawl over it or jump on it. The sheer scale of the city is quite astonishing, especially when standing on the very tip of the Empire State Building. At this height, players can see the entire city, and Treyarch has admirably pulled this off with no fogging or pop-up whatsoever. Press the map button and the camera will soar backward and sit high above the →

STREET WISE

For the first time, Spidey can check out the city of New York from ground level as well as from rooftops

The ability to go down to street level is hardly a token gesture to those who failed many a mission from being too low in the previous *Spider-Man* game. It's an essential part of the gameplay. Spidey will be able to interact with pedestrians and receive bonus missions, foil robberies and protect stores. Nick Kang may be the man on the streets of LA, but the streets of New York are Spidey's turf.



Spidey's a big fan of Jackie Chan's *Rush Hour*



"DID YOU FEEL SOMETHING?"

The Brazilian Wandering spider and the Sydney Funnel-Web spider are among the most deadly spiders in the world. Anyone remember Arachnophobia?



THE BRAZILIAN WANDERING SPIDER...

is very fast, extremely nervous and particularly aggressive. It is believed to contain the most active neurotoxic venom of any living spider - just 0.006mg is enough to kill a mouse. Eek!



THE SYDNEY FUNNEL-WEB SPIDER...

carries atraxotoxin, the world's most dangerous toxin to humans produced in the entire animal kingdom. Peter Parker would definitely not been blessed with the same superpowers had he been bitten by one of these bad boys.



→ city, showing you just how much detail has gone into the creation of this enormous metropolis. Press it again and you'll receive a vertigo-inducing zoom all the way back to where Spidey is standing. In addition to the mammoth city, Treyarch has also managed to throw in over 100 interiors for Spider-Man to explore, including the Daily Bugle and Peter Parker's apartment, and we can expect a seamless transition between the two.

Of course, you know that any virtual city wouldn't be worth the time of day if it didn't have... er, time of day effects, and Treyarch hasn't forgotten. *Spider-Man 2* will feature some astonishing lighting effects, and as the sun goes down, the lights go on. "It's a unique experience as the city literally becomes a character of its own," says Valdes.

WEB OF INTRIGUE

By far the biggest and best improvement is the new swinging system. Like we pointed out before, the invisible ceiling that Spidey's web used to attach to has been ditched in favour of a system that utilises the actual environment. In *Spider-Man 2*, you really are swinging from the buildings, and although it might take a little longer to get used to, the

"IT'S NOT HARD TO BELIEVE THAT YOU ARE SPIDEY WHEN YOU MOVE AS FAST AS THIS!"

result is an infinitely more authentic style of movement that will resemble the films in every way. The key to all of Spidey's movement is momentum. The pendular physics allow players to build up an incredible amount of speed, and this time around Spidey can bust some pretty impressive moves on the fly. Swinging can be combined with *Matrix*-style wall runs, sliding down buildings, loops and over 50 different aerial manoeuvres. Pulling off these special moves is reminiscent of *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater*, and no doubt players will find their own personal favourites. Eventually, you should be flailing through the air with more finesse than the entire Chinese diving team combined. Each special move has been hand-animated so we should expect some very comic-inspired stuff. Bruce "if chins could kill" Campbell will return as your sarcastic tutorial guide to help you come to grips with the much improved system, so expect plenty of groovy one-liners to get you into the swing of things, baby.

It's hard to describe how much work Treyarch has done on the swinging system; it's like somebody dumped the last 30 seconds of the original *Spider-Man* movie on their desks and simply said, "Make it like that." In our demonstration we saw Spidey leap off the very tip of the Empire State Building, swan dive around 300 metres, fire a quick web line into a building and swing within inches of a taxi. Drawing himself toward the building he ran up it still



clutching his web line in one hand. Firing off another web line he swung in another graceful arc and released, arching his back and flailing as he soared through the sky. Spidey deftly landed on a roof, sprinted across it, and threw himself off the other side. He continued like this all the way to Central Park. It's not hard to believe that you really are Spidey when you can move as fast and as fluidly as this!

The flexibility of the swinging system not only means that every player will find a slightly different way to make it across the city, but every player will have his or her own preferred style of locomotion. Some players may like to swing low and fast through the traffic, zipping over trees and signs, hurling themselves around corners, only ever a millisecond away from becoming a smear on the pavement. Other players may prefer to be higher above the city, gracefully soaring from skyscrapers, sprinting across roofs and leaping from massive heights. Either way, the sense of

velocity is intense. The atmosphere of *Spider-Man 2* will be far closer to the movie than the original ever was. Frantic combinations of swings, wall runs, sprinting and diving will all serve to deliver the definitive Spider-Man experience.

SPIDER SENSE SLOW-MO

While these special moves may look hotter than Alyssa Milano, they're far more than just icing on a very tasty looking cake. Each of these tricks and combos builds up your spider sense, an area never fully realised in past *Spider-Man* games. This time around, to ensure the player can fully experience Spidey's incredible reflexes, you have the ability to dilate time, sending the world around you into slow motion and allowing you to spot incoming attacks and dodge them faster than you can say "friendly neighbourhood Spider-Man".

We know that slow motion features in PS2 games are a dime-a-dozen these days but it looks like Treyarch has done a great job of making it much more than just a gimmick. Spidey can weave, duck and even counter-attack while in this state, but these aren't the only improvements to the combat portion of the game. In true pro-wrestler fashion, Spidey has added a variety of moves to his ass-kicking repertoire. An innovative juggling system has been included, which means Spidey can launch crims high above the streets, then leap up and throw a couple more hits while

Another day, another nutter!
It's gotta be New York city




"Taaaaaake THAT! And have some of THIS too!"



airborne, just for good measure. His web attacks have also been given a greater focus. Of course, old favourites like the web yank are still available, but Spidey now has a few more tricks up his red spandex sleeve.

Spidey can now lasso up to four opponents at once and swing them around and around using the left analogue stick before letting them go, and he'll even be able to wrap opponents in web and string them up on a streetlight like a piñata. Spidey's gone through a number of other slight changes, including the ability to charge up a super jump to gain height quickly or escape a mob of heavies looking to lay down some pain. He can also sprint, meaning combining swings and runs shouldn't lead to a loss of speed. But perhaps the biggest change is that players no longer need to worry about collecting web cartridges. With the sheer size and scope of the city, the developers have conceded that Spidey should always have web power, and since it's inspired heavily by the movie, it made sense to naturally give him an infinite amount.

Now, speaking of the movie, plot details are about as rare as an intelligent remark from Jessica Simpson at the moment, so naturally Activision isn't able to comment too much on the story. We do know that, like before, the game will follow the story of the movie and include additional sub-plots using other characters from the Marvel universe. However, this time, it doesn't stop there. As the protector of Manhattan, Spidey will have to contend with random crimes and a boatload of other civilian-in-distress missions. You might be doing anything from stopping a purse-snatcher, foiling a robbery or saving some chump kid's balloon. Coupled with these are over 100 timed challenges set all throughout the city, resulting in a package that looks like it'll keep players busy for quite a long while.

We'll be keeping our spidey sense tuned so the minute we hear more about this super strength epic, we'll be on it like white on rice. In the meantime, we're all tingling at the prospect of *Spider-Man 2* being one of the best super hero games around, but having seeing the trailer for the film, it's difficult to decide which one we're most excited about. Decisions, decisions... 

YE OLDE SPIDER

For a heroic character who keeps his personal life very quiet, Spidey sure does make a few cameos!

This will be the second appearance for the Amazing Spider-Man on PS2, but some of you might remember that Spidey showed himself twice on the humble PSone also. The first *Spider-Man* on PSone hailed from developer Neversoft, the team which consistently spoils us with its excellent *Tony Hawk's Pro Skater* series, and even in those days, was a tidy effort indeed.





WORDS: RICHIE YOUNG

OVER THE MOON

Daniel Gillies is the latest wonderboy from Down Under to hit Hollywood. As Peter Parker's new nemesis, sparks will fly!



Spidey's retro headphones failed to impress the girls

In *Spider-Man 2*, his first Hollywood blockbuster, Gillies is enjoying the high life. Promoting such an anticipated movie is a big job. Daniel managed to get through the *OPS2* interview like a seasoned veteran, but we did manage to force a few clues out of him...

OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE: Your character's a new one — can you tell us about him?

DANIEL GILLIES: Sure! His name is John Jameson. He's the son of J. Jonah Jameson. He's an astronaut and he's Mary Jane's lover. So he's got a few accolades!

OPS2: The New Zealand movie scene is really kicking off now... are you planning to get involved in that?

DG: Yeh! It's going alright at the moment isn't it, man? Where are you based?

OPS2: Sydney.

DG: Oh, I love Sydney! I think Sydney's one of the most amazing cities. I spent a couple of months in Sydney and I loved it.

OPS2: You do realise that because you said that, that →



You'd look smug too if you'd stolen Spidey's gal



→ Australia will now claim you as one of their own?!

DG: No! They won't! You know with the Russell Crowe thing, they're worthy of claiming Russell. Russell is way more an Aussie than New Zealander.

OPS2: How would you describe John's personality?

DG: Mate, he's the all-American golden boy. He's kind of like the Prom King. He's a lot more together than I am. He's a sweet, charming charismatic guy – not a hairy-ass Kiwi!

OPS2: But he does have a dark side...

DG: Well, y'know it's interesting because in the comics he definitely does have a dark side and in the movie we have some interesting things going on which you'll see.

OPS2: Is it hard to keep quiet about the plot of the movie?

DG: It is and it isn't. It's such a habit and a ritual now of not talking it. There's a few things I can talk about, but it's kind of second nature not to reveal too much... [laughs]

OPS2: Will we see any Man-Wolf scenes in *Spider-Man 3*?

DG: Mate, to be honest ahh... we'll have to see. They're talking about going in that direction. More than anything, they're really like "this movie we just wanted to introduce John." It's interesting that you actually even know about Man-Wolf because I didn't know much about him! You must have done your research. You've made me happy because a lot of people don't do their research before interviewing me!

Anyway, there's the Man-Wolf thing and there's the time when he goes to the moon when he gets that moon rock that gives him super human strength. He's in the first issue of *Spider-Man* and I think Mary Jane doesn't even appear until issue 15 or something like that. I dunno, I think they've got

Man-Wolf as a possibility. And let's face it – *Spider-Man* is a franchise and they're just giving themselves options.

OPS2: Were you involved in many special effects scenes?

DG: Ahh, not really man. I mean, we'll have to see... apart from having to do a couple of little stunts – not really.

OPS2: Were you involved in the making of the game?

DG: No! I haven't heard anything yet about the making of the game. I mean, I know that the merchandising is about to kick off fairly soon in terms of what we have to do for the action figures and so forth but I don't know a lot about what's going on with the game, but I gotta say it'll be kick ass if he ends up being a character in the game! [laughs]

OPS2: But you have signed up for *Spider-Man 3* I take it?

DG: Well, yeah. It's a part of the deal with the contract. I'm sort of at Sony's disposal, y'know? Loosely speaking, I'm their bitch! I'm owned, mate! And I think it's safe to presume that it's going ahead.

OPS2: Pleasing all the millions of *Spider-Man* fans in terms of accuracy must have its dramas...

DG: That's what I was thinking too. My heart went out to Peter Jackson – looking at *Lord of the Rings* you think, "F**k!" Imagine trying to get the specifics of that and try and make it a little more interesting for a modern audience. Sam Raimi's a bad ass too, though! He's awesome, mate.

OPS2: Have you met any *Spider-Man* fans yet?

DG: I have actually! I don't think I realised....even now, I'm a bit stupefied how well received the whole thing is. It's just, I mean, I know it's a good movie but people are just nuts about it! They're *nuts* about it! They just love it! I guess it's kinda because it's the ultimate underdog movie... In terms of the comic book hero Peter Parker is more the "everyman". You take Superman and he's kind of born with all these incredible gifts. You take Batman and he's kind of dark and mysterious. There's sort of a God-like quality to them. But Peter Parker is more of a normal guy. People just love and really respond to that.

OPS2: How was the experience of playing opposite Kirsten Dunst and Tobey Maguire?

DG: I was mostly with Kirsten. I did a few scenes with Tobey but most of the scenes were with Kirsten. That woman's a workhorse man! She's just constantly, constantly doing something. She's got more credits to her name than some actors that are like 40 and 50 year-old veterans. She's the ultimate girl next door. She's really just a charming, cool person who helped me out and looked after me. ♪



The ultimate solution to overcrowded city trains



THE PLAYERS

Despite its name, *Spider-Man 2* will have more than one character in it! Here's a little background for any Spider-Man newbies out there...



JOHN JAMESON

The son of *Daily Bugle* editor J. Jonah Jameson, John is a top astronaut. In the comics, he gained super strength while out in space, and eventually became Man-Wolf. In the cartoons he brought alien Venom to Earth. Which story will the movies follow?



MARY JANE WATSON

After dating Flash, Harry and Peter in the first movie, the red-headed hussy ditches Peter for new love John. Although, considering she ends up marrying Peter in the comics, we're guessing the pair will get back together before the credits roll.



DOCTOR OCTOPUS

The comic's fat, Elton John look-a-like and his bright green spandex has been ditched in favour of hi-tech bio-organic armour in the movie. Let's hope Spidey kicks the crap out of Doc Oc so that Venom can be the nemesis in the next flick.



J. JONAH JAMESON

As well as being the proud father of a bouncing baby Man-Wolf, Jonah owns the *Daily Bugle*. Peter works as a freelance photographer for the newspaper but no matter how hard he tries Jameson always puts a bad spin on the stories.



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fun, anyone?
PlayStation.2

Reality Bites

Tired of the old cliché that the line between games and reality is becoming blurred? You're not alone

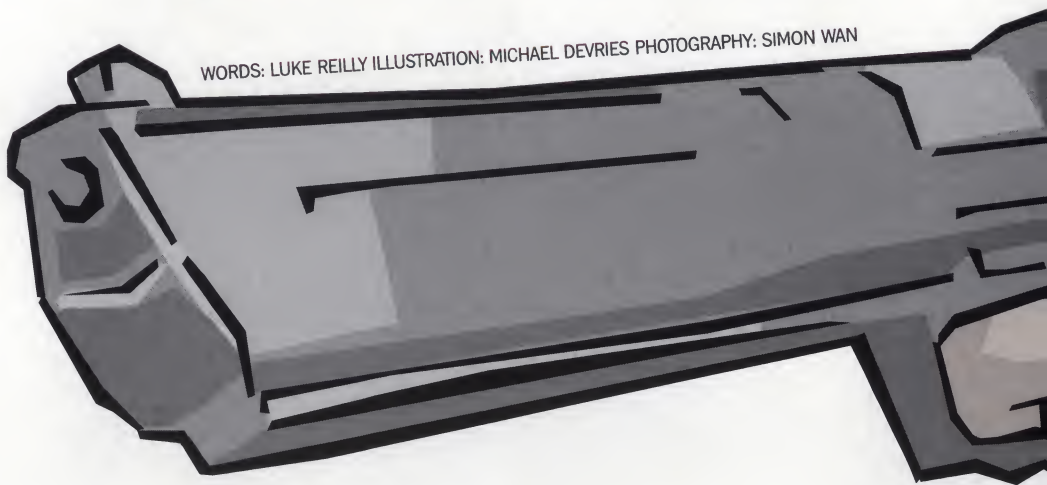
Developers around the world are striving for more and more realism in their games, and they're succeeding. In the past few years we've seen some of the most realistic games ever made grace the PlayStation 2, and the future is looking even more lifelike.

But, even with all the advances in technology and game design, there are still always instances where they just can't hide the fact you're playing a game. Ever noticed how you can punch a guard in the face in *Metal Gear Solid 2* but if you hide long enough, he'll forget all about you? Or ever questioned why you can't just use your chainsaw to hack obstacles out of the way in *Evil Dead: A Fistful of Boomstick* instead of spending hours looking for some hidden item which magically clears your path? Even the most realistic-looking games have unrealistic elements, and it's hard to think otherwise.

Locked doors may lengthen the time it takes to finish the game and give you a better sense of satisfaction when you open them, but no doubt there are occasions where you wish you could just shoot the lock, kick it open and keep going. Likewise, writing off your car on the last lap of an important race would be enough to make a grown man cry, but forcing a mate into a tyre wall at top speed feels a little less fulfilling when their vehicle isn't engulfed by a fireball.

This month *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* illustrates some more realistic ways to deal with common game scenarios, and the would-be consequences of your gaming actions if they were replicated in the real world!

WORDS: LUKE REILLY ILLUSTRATION: MICHAEL DEVRIES PHOTOGRAPHY: SIMON WAN



Resident Evil 3: Nemesis

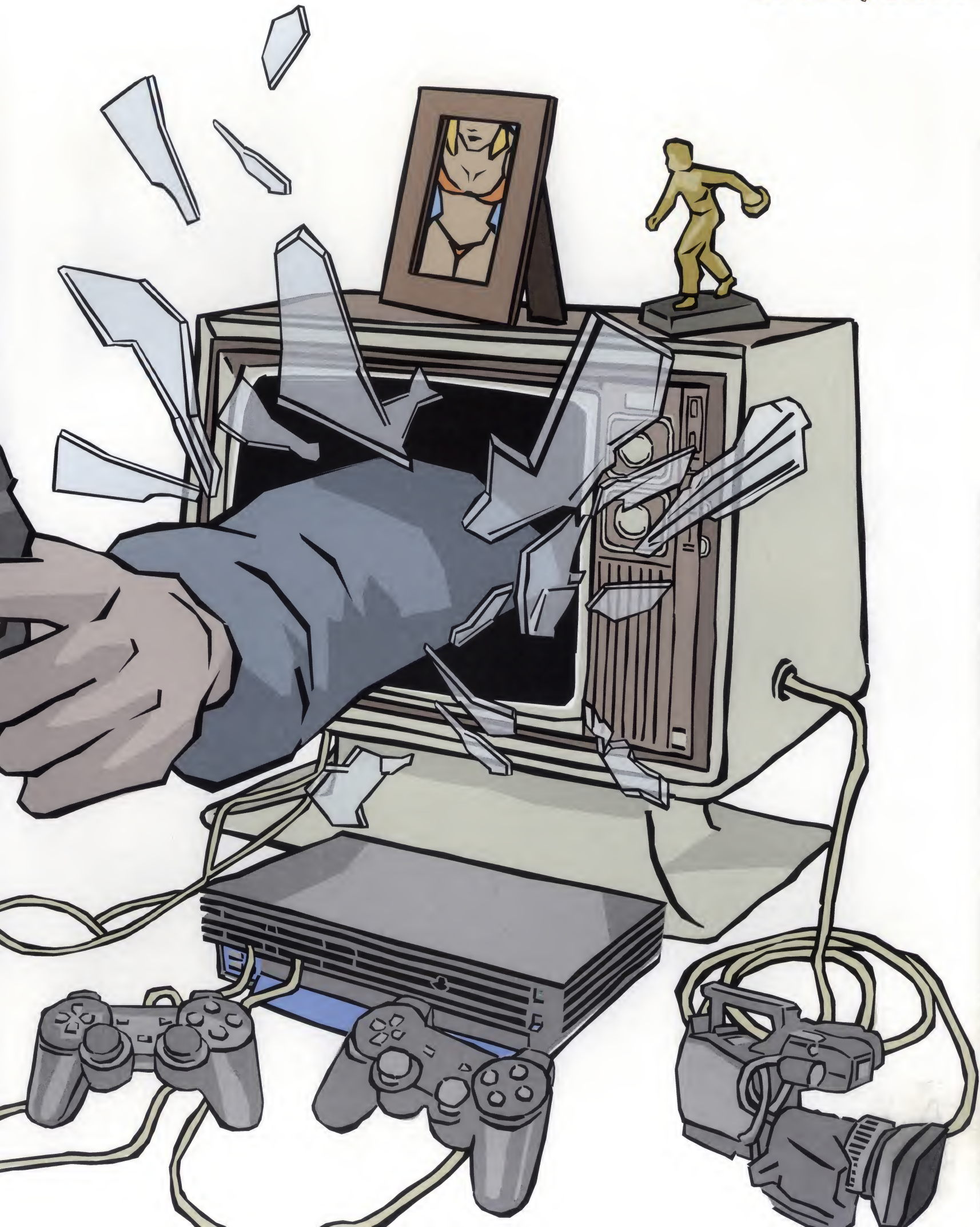
The Game

You're staring at a locked gate. Unfortunately, you know what you have to do. So after half an hour of backtracking, you find a box. It's locked too, but you've played enough to know there's something in there and you need it. After another 10 minutes of ransacking the surroundings you find a key and use it to open that confounded box. Surprisingly enough, there is another key in it, and you use that one to open the gate. Whoever said patience was a virtue never played a survival horror game.

Reality

Forget about searching for conveniently placed keys; you step up and climb over the gate and continue an hour ahead of schedule. Simple! →







→ Stuntman

The Game

You fang around tight streets in your hotted-up car and zoom under trucks, dodging traffic, jumping over obstacles and leaping over the marina. After a solid few minutes of insane driving you reach the last stunt. It's taken you 40 attempts to get here but you've finally made it. Your heart is pumping. All you have to do is launch your car into a flying helicopter. You miss. The director yells "cut", and you start over again. If there was ever a game that could make you pop a vein in your forehead before you finished it, it was this one.

Reality

Real stunt work is performed one painstaking shot at a time, not all in a row. While the crew struggle to set up each shot, you spend most of the day sitting in your stunt vehicle eating Monte Carlos pondering whether or not you'll ever be more than a behind-the-scenes featurette.



Metal Gear Solid 2: Sons of Liberty

The Game

You're creeping down a stairway on a huge ship. At the bottom sits a guard, completely unawares you're there. Just before you're able to snap his neck he hears you and spins around. A few quick jabs and a kick upside the head shut him up, but when he wakes up, he'll be mad. You hide under a cardboard box until the heat dies down.

Reality

Guards, unfortunately, aren't as forgetful in real life! They'd lock down the area and post men on each door, cutting off all escape. If they see you walk into a room and there's only a lone cardboard box there the next minute, they're going to fill it full of bullets.



A tiny sapling brings your rally car to a dead stop and ruins your podium finish.

You come across a locked door and despite carrying 20 weapons you can't blast it open.

Your character falls into a body of water and only then do you find out they can't swim.

Your character chooses not to shoot an important enemy during a cut-scene.

You're driving a car and there's no way to honk the horn.

Your character can't jump, and a knee-high obstacle forces you to take a more dangerous route. Agh!

Progressing any further in the game means solving a stupid, boring and utterly pointless puzzle.

||:O:| ||:O:| ||:O:| ||:O:| Frustrate-O-Meter

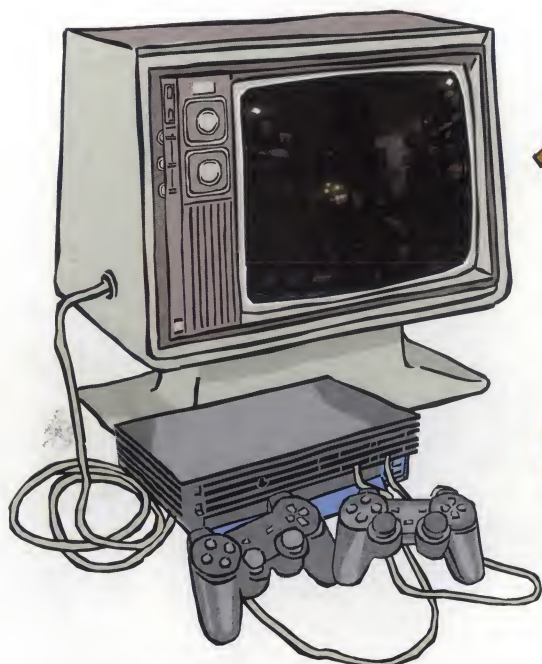
Tom Clancy's: Splinter Cell

The Game

Slinking down a dark hallway, you notice a guard appear at the other end and begin walking towards you. You quickly enter the nearest room, a janitor's closet, and shoot out the light. Unfortunately for you the guard heard the door and comes to check it out. You're feeling very tense but keep absolutely still. Your heart stops when the guard opens your door, but he notices nothing and returns to his post.

Reality

You think the dark hallway is keeping you out of sight but you've forgotten the green lights attached to your head. The guard spots these and fire, terminating you. The US government denies your existence and your daughter goes to live with a foster family and become a country singer.



Gran Turismo 3

The Game

Screaming down the straight on the Seattle Circuit in your shiny Skyline you sneak a glance in your mirror to see your nearest opponent. When you notice the car behind you is getting smaller, you realise you've missed the braking point and spin into the wall at 200 clicks. With a sigh you slam the accelerator back down and keep racing, hitting a dozen other walls before the race is over.

Reality

Screaming down the straight on the Seattle Circuit in your shiny Skyline you sneak a glance in your mirror to see your nearest opponent. When you notice the car behind you is getting smaller, you realise you've missed the braking point and you spin into the wall at 200 clicks. You die.



Medal Of Honor: Frontline

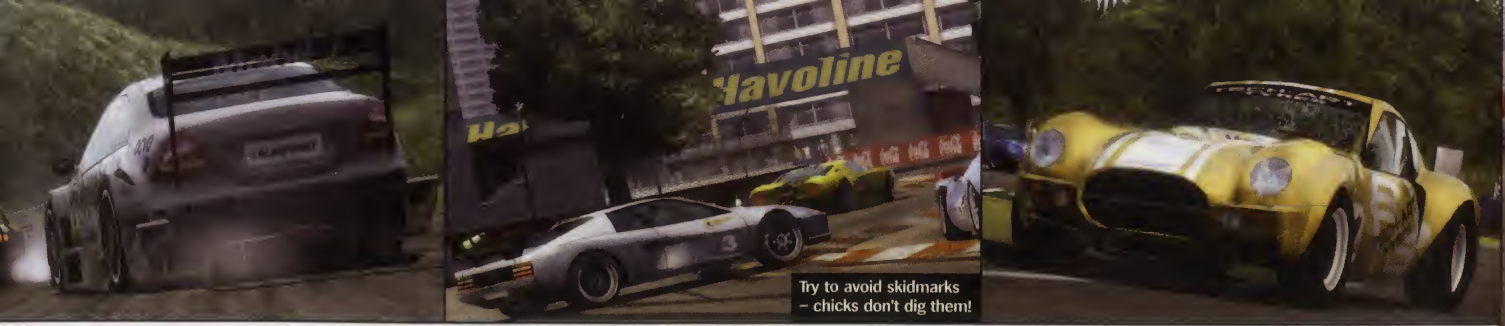
The Game

Standing in the landing craft awaiting your arrival on the beaches of Normandy the anticipation is killing you. The vessel is destroyed but somehow you find your way to shore. Your commanding officer is waiting and orders you to provide cover for the surviving members of your squad as they make their way up the beach. Once you manage to locate him again he sends you back down the beach to escort some poor bastard back to the new position. He'll then send you darting across a minefield to single-handedly liquidate all its occupants. This is truly beyond the call of duty.

Reality

You're dead.





WORDS: TRISTAN OGILVIE

The Ultimate Driving Sim?

Will Codemasters' new offering provide some stiff competition for the most anticipated racing title of all time, Gran Turismo 4? Who cares as long as there is HRT!



Holden Commodore VY



Ford Falcon BA



Subaru Impreza Rally Car



Audi TT-R



Aston Martin DB5



Ford 1968 Mustang



Driving backwards? Must be an Xbox driver

The signs show how many beers you have to skull per lap



THE CARS

Here's just a hint of the cars that are confirmed for V8 Supercars 2:

AC Cobra 289 CRS
Aston Martin DB5
Aston Martin DB7 Volante
Aston Martin DB9
Audi TT-R
Bowler Wildcat
Brallinger Stock Car
Ford 1934 Coupe
Ford 1968 Mustang
Ford 9000-series
Ford F-150 Lightning
Ford Falcon
Ford Falcon AU
Ford Falcon BA
Ford GT
Ford GT90
Ford Mustang SVT
GHE Global GT Light
Holden Commodore
Holden Commodore VX
Holden Commodore VY
Jaguar E-type
Jaguar XJ220
Jaguar XKR Convertible
Jaguar XKR Pan-American
Koenig C62
Koenig Competition 2002
Mercedes-Benz CLK-DTM 2003
Mitsubishi 3000GT
Mitsubishi Evo VII
Mitsubishi Evo VII Rally Car
Nissan Skyline GT-R (R34)
Opel V8 Coupe
Seat Leon Supercopa
Solo OW04
Subaru Impreza Rally Car
Subaru Impreza WRX

"Forget the sissy 'bounce off other cars head-on at 160km/h without a scratch' of other racers"



Australia is truly a multicultural society. It's a country where members of many different races and religions can all get around in tracky dacks and thongs, eat meat pies and share an unwavering love for Bert Newton. And yet at every Census there are thousands of individuals who don't fit into any of the categories. In the "Religion" section, amid a smattering of greasy fingerprints, the "Other" box is continually ticked, with "V8 Supercars" scrawled next to it.

If motor racing is a religion in this country, then V8 Supercars is the equivalent of a religious cult. Its followers might not gather to drink rat poison, burn crosses or build intergalactic spaceships, but they are nonetheless extremely hardcore, split straight down the middle between the subscribers to the Faith of Ford and the believers in the Holy Holden Gospel. Every Sunday they gather before the church of Channel Ten to witness the Reverends of Revs deliver their tire-screaming sermons, whooping and hollering with all the verve of evangelical ministers.

THE RESURRECTION...

So with such devout dedication to the sport, it was hardly surprising that many felt a little disappointed with Codemasters' *TOCA Race Driver* (re-branded V8 Supercars

for the Australian market) when it landed on the PS2 in 2002. While it featured numerous racing modes, cars, tracks and an innovative career mode, the mighty sport of V8 Supercars seemed to be only half-heartedly represented, and many fans believed that despite it being a worthy racing alternative to *Gran Turismo 3* the name change was merely a marketing ploy to drive sales Down Under. However, Codemasters seems to be one developer that certainly learns from its mistakes and the forthcoming V8 Supercars 2 looks to offer the most complete V8 experience for fanatics yet.

Supercars 2 is set to boast the official V8 Supercar point system, rules, qualifying, shootouts, fuel and pit stops from the 2003 season. There's a whole heap of new tracks like Surfers Paradise, Hidden Valley and Barbagallo to go along with old favourites such as Phillip Island and Bathurst. And if that's not enough to tighten your nuts and give you a flaming hot rod, this next tidbit will. After being criminally absent from the previous game, the all-conquering Holden Racing Team will be yours to play, along with other new teams such as Team Kiwi and Ford Performance Racing.

Of course, you're going to have to take care of these wheels. Forget about the sissy "bounce off other cars head-on at 160km/h without a scratch" of certain other racers – V8 Supercars 2 will once again allow you to get more smashed than the guests at a 1970s Logie Awards ceremony, thanks to Codemasters' brutally detailed Terminal Damage Engine. The new damage system has been redesigned from the ground up in order to offer the most advanced physics engine ever featured in a racing game.



Our money's on the one at the back

TURFING OUT TOCA

While the game will still be titled *TOCA Race Driver 2* overseas, Codemasters has removed the wimpy British racing championship from the game entirely. This might seem a surprise to some but consider this – the cars of the British Touring Car Championship, which TOCA governs, are front-drive, bland two litre objects of non-desire such as Astras. By comparison, our Australian touring cars can barely cope with their snarling V8 engines and the Germans have 450bhp, rear-drive coupes. So we don't feel that any of you are going to lose any sleep over the absence of British Touring cars because, put bluntly, they're about as cool as Martin Lawrence.



Ford F-150 Lightning

Jaguar XJ220

Jaguar E-type

Koenig C62

Mercedes-Benz CLK-DTM 2003

Mitsubishi Evo VII Rally Car

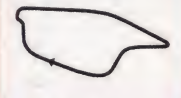
THE TRACKS

There are many miles to travel in V8 Supercars 2, and here are some of the tracks you'll be going around and around and...



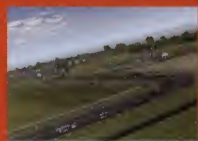
BATHURST, NSW

A1-Ring
Adelaide
Adria
Barbagallo
Brands Hatch
Donington Park
Eastern Creek
EuroSpeedway
Hidden Valley Raceway
Hockenheimring
Kyalami
Loch Rannoch Rally Cross
Mantorp Park Long



PUKEKOHE, NZ

Mazda Raceway Laguna
Michigan Loop
Norisring
Nurburgring Sprint
Oran Park
Oulton Park
Phillip Island
Pike's Peak International
Raceway
Road America
Shortwood Park
Southfield Heights
Southfield Park
Surfers Paradise
Texas Motor Speedway
Valllunga
Zandvoort



SANDOWN, VIC

"Windows smash, doors get ripped right off, and a head-on collision can end your race"

→ Windows smash, doors get ripped right off, and a head-on collision can end your race. Skim past one of the trackside barriers and you'll get a few scratches or a lost side mirror; slam full speed into the rear of the lead driver and watch one of your tyres pop off and wobble awkwardly down the track; your Dual Shock 2 shuddering in your hands and your testicles crushed into a fine powder. And don't expect to just miraculously carry out the race once you find yourself in the latter situation – V8 Supercars 2 doesn't let you reset and continue on in the career mode. When it's over, it's really over and you'll have to bear the consequences as far as results, points and earnings go. It adds depth to the game and means you need to concentrate throughout the entire race, even if you're lapping everybody.

And you don't just get visual clues as to the state of your car, the handling will be affected too. The damage engine has also been integrated with the sound engine; meaning that all manner of noises are used to distinguish between faulty parts, such as gear-shift slipping and engines over-revving. If you play this bad boy through a decent sound system your subwoofer will be throbbing more fiercely than your head at the end of a long weekend at Summernats.

The handling of the cars falls just short of simulation, but it's still another improvement over the last game. It's definitely responsive and not at all sluggish, and in the in-

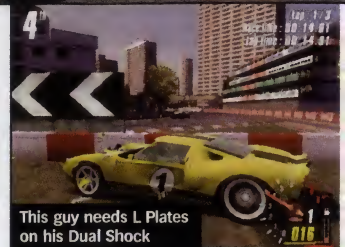
progress version that OPS2 got its hands on we were throwing the backs of our cars out around corners, surfing ripple strips with our front tires and embarking on crazy skips across the grass when the computer-controlled cars got too pushy. There are other little details that invoke authenticity too; like using the skid marks left by the driver in front of you in order to more accurately judge your braking distance for a corner. And never mind the standard inclusion of both automatic and manual transmission modes, V8 Supercars 2 is rumoured to feature an optional clutch to really provide you with complete control.

KEEP ON TRUCKIN'

While the V8 content may have been substantially increased in the new game, don't think for a moment that you'll find yourself confined to the one racing style. Codemasters is packing no fewer than 15 different types of motor sport into the one game, all based on real life championships, cars and circuits, from Formula Fords to rally and street racing to Super Trucks. Yes, Super Trucks, and if you thought the Terminal Damage Engine was rough in a V8 then you'll be spitting out teeth and strapping on a neck brace after thundering into the barrier behind the wheel of one of the hulking big rigs. Steering in the trucks is heavy and responses are sluggish. And don't expect to be



Aussie, Aussie, Aussie!
Oi, Oi, Oi!



This guy needs L Plates on his Dual Shock



Every last detail on the cars is spot-on



Seat Leon Supercopa



Solo OW04



AC Cobra 289 CRS



Aston Martin DB7 Volante



Brailing Stock Car



Ford 1934 Coupe

SMASH IT UP!

Closely rivaling *Reflections'* *Driv3r* crash system for accuracy, the damage model system in *V8 Supercars 2* is based on detailed observation of real-life motor sport crashes. Each vehicle model contains thousands of deformation points, so the crash effects occur exactly as they would in reality. You can be left without windscreens, bumpers, and doors – and don't even think about trashing one of the four-tonne trucks!



able to see if there's anyone in front of you.

V8 Supercars 2 has been dubbed by its creators as 'The Ultimate Racing Simulator', in a seemingly deliberate jibe at its rival *Gran Turismo* which is known as 'The Real Driving Simulator'. And Codies' new racer certainly comes across as being the more diverse of the two titles, featuring 30 global championships in total including GT Sports Car Racing, DTM, Global GT Lights, Open Wheel Grand Prix, Classic Car Racing, Stockcar Oval Racing, Ice Racing, Convertible Racing, and Performance Cars. For those unsure – yes, Ice Racing is exactly what you think it is, and drift-style racing in sports cars has never been so slippery!

What's more, it's all authentic. The car makes, models, teams and advertising across all the different motor sports are faithful reproductions of their real-life counterparts. Aside from a few fictional circuits, the tracks are all real too – even the amateur stock car racing takes place on real tracks like Texas Speedway and Pikes Peak.

Ardent *TOCA* players that have been with the series since its inception on the PSone will find the majority of the tracks familiar, but many of them have been overhauled using real topographical data and racers' feedback, and it's noticeable – the hallowed Bathurst track will surprise even the die-hards by being even more challenging than before.

Those same serial *TOCA* players will also be happy to see the ultra bumpy Loch Ranoch track reanimated and updated from *TOCA 2*, while Florida, Chicago and Tokyo tracks round out the handful of fictional courses. Real circuits are too numerous to name, but add all the German and Australian touring car circuits (which include the A1-Ring, Adelaide, Hockenheim and Nurburgring F1 tracks) to classics such as Donington, Oulton Park, Brands Hatch, Laguna Seca and Road America.

GET A NEW JOB!

Remember Ryan McKane? Trying desperately to forget about him? Don't worry – that whiny American won't be returning in *V8 Supercars 2*. Mercifully, the new storyline isn't the laughable tearjerker that shamed the original. It still plays as a "carPG" like last time, only you now guide an unnamed driver (entirely from a first-person view during the cut-scenes) who's looking for superstardom status, and an eventual break into Grand Prix racing. To get there, you take part in different championships all over the world, where you must place in top positions but not necessarily placing first every time. The pace of the single-player mode is most definitely fast. As soon as you start getting used to the way one vehicle drives, the championship is over and you have to move onto a new one, adjusting to the unique controls of a completely new car as quickly as possible.

Apart from the story mode, there'll be the obligatory free race option, time trial and possibly a two-player split-screen mode, but the thing that will have fans pelvic-



thrusting their way into pole position in the line to purchase the game is its online mode. While it hasn't yet been officially confirmed, there's a very strong possibility that you'll be able to race against real German players around Hockenheimring or real Californians around Laguna Seca, all from the comfort of your lounge room. While *Gran*

finished product has got a good chance of giving the *Gran Turismo* series a run for the racing genre crown. It will be tough given *GT's* overwhelming prestige and credibility among rev-head gamers, but *GT* fans have been crying out for destructible cars for years now and *V8 Supercars 2's* impressive damage model has certainly got the potential to

"YOU'LL BE ABLE TO RACE REAL GERMAN PLAYERS AROUND HOCKENHEIMRING"

Turismo 4 is said to only offer online support for up to six players at once, *V8 Supercars 2* could conceivably accommodate at least double that due to its larger grid size, and thus could justifiably become the preferred online racer for all the pro drivers.

V8 Supercars 2 is certainly aiming to offer something for all racing fans and, provided that Codemasters doesn't spread itself too thin trying to cater to so many tastes, the

separate the men from the boys. It may not look quite as pretty graphically, but if variety is the spice of life then *V8 Supercars 2* is set to be the racing equivalent of Jamie Oliver's spice rack. If you've got motor oil coursing through your veins and have been waiting for the most comprehensive racing title to date, prepare yourselves, ladies and gentlemen, as your expectations are set to be exceeded in September 2004. **B**



Ford Mustang SVT



Jaguar XKR Convertible



Jaguar XKR Pan-American



Bowler Wildcat



Ford GT90



Koenig Competition 2002



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PlayStation[®] 2

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M
15

PLAY-TEST

BROUGHT TO YOU BY 

REVIEW CHARTER

FACT: OFFICIAL PLAYSTATION 2 MAGAZINE'S reviews are the best in the business. Our crack squad of reviewers play the games longer, harder and better than anyone else. And we absolutely love what we do.

It's this dedication that means you can trust our scores above anyone else's. Whether a game's superb or sewage, our experts will tell it like it is with buckets of opinion rather than a few cheap gags and some PR nonsense. Our experienced reviewers have written for the game industry's most revered publications, both here and overseas. What's more, our writers have plenty of 'heritage' in the industry, having a collective history spanning into decades. Rest assured that these are opinions you can trust.

Next time you head off to spend your hard-earned cash on a PlayStation 2 game, make sure you read our reviews first.

REVIEW RATINGS

HERE'S WHAT OUR REVIEW SCORES STAND FOR:

- 10/10** Nigh on revolutionary. A game that could change the face of gaming forever
- 09/10** A truly astonishing game. If you have a PlayStation 2, you need this now
- 08/10** Highly recommended
- 07/10** Good, solid fare that's definitely well worth a look
- 06/10** Better than average, and ideal for hardcore fans of the genre
- 05/10** An average game
- 04/10** Poor, but still with the odd moment
- 03/10** Extremely disappointing
- 02/10** To be avoided
- 01/10** Beer mat

THE OPS2 AWARDS

We don't hand out high scores for nothing, so when you see one of these, you'll know it's a sign of quality. Look for them on game boxes.



The Gold Award is a rare gem and only to be given to games that score that magic 10/10. This score indicates gaming of simply incredible quality!



The Silver Award is for games that receive 9/10. If you see this, it's a sign of star quality, indicating that you should buy this game now!



The Bronze Award is for games that score 8/10. These games are highly recommended and are 100% guaranteed to satisfy.

DVD / MUSIC / MEDIA
media

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School of Rock / Starship Troopers 2
Once Upon A Time In Mexico / Underworld



SINGSTAR.....48

You're the voice! Out-sing your mates in this party game riot

HITMAN: CONTRACTS.....52

Baldie's back! The darker and more violent assassination training sim just got better!

GRAN TURISMO 4: PROLOGUE.....56

The ultimate driving test for all would-be Gran Turismo 4 masters!

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X SINGING GAME

SINGSTAR

Get on up and shake your funky vocal chords to Sony's latest party game

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: **SONY**
 DEVELOPER: **SONY**
 PRICE: **\$99.95 INC. 2 MICS**
 PLAYERS: **1-2**
 OUT: **NOW**
 WEBSITE: **WWW.PLAYSTATION.COM.AU**
 60HZ MODE: **NO**
 WIDESCREEN: **NO**
 SURROUND SOUND: **NO**
 ONLINE: **NO**

BACK STORY

Sony has already endeavoured to push the boundaries of the PS2 as a home entertainment hub. Originally, there was the inclusion of the DVD/CD player and innovations like EyeToy that created a whole new genre of gameplay. SingStar is the next evolution of that philosophy.

We've all been there. Whether you find yourself at a sing-along at Christmas time with the rels, or in a karaoke bar at closing time... it can happen to you. Maybe it's the influence of shows like *Australian Idol*, or *Popstars*, or maybe the fact that Aunt Gladys has had too much sherry, but you're forced to endure what sounds less like singing, and more like a cat being slowly cut in half with a hacksaw. Given a chance, you could show just how much better a vocalist you are, and more importantly, just how much they suck. This is where Sony's new karaoke sensation *SingStar* comes in.

On booting up *SingStar*, you're greeted with Sony's trademark stylish menus. Once you select a track to perform, the original film clip begins, accompanied by synchronised lyrics at the bottom of the screen – but this is where the similarity with common karaoke ends. A series of staggered grey lines appear superimposed over the film clip that represent the pitch of the vocals... the vocals that you need to supply. As you sing along, the pitch of your vocals will be overlaid in blue – ideally it will be a perfect match for the greyed lines, but unless you're some kind of vocal prodigy, it's usually not the case!

Depending on how well each line is sung, you're given a comment on your performance, from 'bad' to 'cool', and a corresponding score. When the song ends, your score is tallied up and compared to a perfect performance. As a result, your attempt is given a rank, from the miserable 'tone deaf' to the lofty heights of 'lead singer'. All that you have to do is hit all the right notes at the right time – sounds simple? It isn't!

The voice recognition software that is the basis of *SingStar* is quite accurate, and is pre-programmed to know precisely what notes you should be hitting and when. If you don't manage to carry the tune or keep missing your cues, be prepared to be paid out so hard that it'd send Dicko home in tears. If you're finding it too hard a task, or even not enough of a challenge for your singing prowess you can tweak how demanding the game is at getting exactly the required tone.

TIME TO PURSUE A SOLO CAREER

For the lone vocalist, you can engage in Solo Play, Freestyle, or Career mode. Solo Play is the standard game as previously described, with (obviously) only one player. Freestyle mode is a bit of a cop-out, and reduces the game to a simple karaoke exercise, without scoring or ranks. Maybe this mode was included to protect the ego of the wannabes that can't quite hack the voice analysis software telling them that they're crap! The last single-player game is Career mode, which puts the player into the role of a promising hopeful, looking to make it in a singing career. The game starts with your friend hooking you up with a club gig, and you have to earn fame and fortune through quality performances, with impressive gigs getting you noticed by industry bigwigs. Not a radical departure from standard play, but enough to breathe more life into the solo game.

With a buddy (or indeed rival) taking up the second mic, there are a couple of options to pursue. Firstly, there's the flowery Duet mode, which simply means that two players can sing through the same song together.

JUST BEAT IT

Just some of the tracks you'll find in SingStar:



"Just a Little"
Liberty X



"Scandalous"
Mis-Teeq



"I Believe in a Thing Called Love"
The Darkness



"Get This Party Started"
Pink



"Murder on the Dancefloor"
Sophie Ellis Bextor



"World of Our Own"
Westlife

BETTER THAN

DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX

WORSE THAN

AMPLITUDE

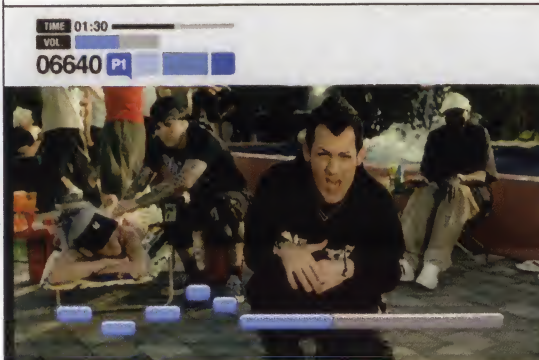
LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Karaoke + strong song list + competitive aspect = winning formula

What they need to fix

Some dud game modes, and a few ordinary tracks



Girls like cars and mo-ney



Have a - ways been here
Out - side of my door



SingStar has the trademark PS2 style!

The game doesn't divide up the karaoke lyrics into two parts, so it's either a case of pounding out the song in unison, or using a little initiative to break it up between the two of you and try to create some harmonies.

Battle mode is the core of the multiplayer game, and pits two players against each other in a battle of vocals, with only the truly greater singer crowned king or queen.

"ANYONE AT ALL CAN PLAY, FROM A FIVE-YEAR-OLD TO YOUR GROOVY GRANDMA"

The somewhat minor downfall of Battle mode is that in a game where high scores are so vital, you have to painstakingly re-enter new names every time new players step up. A system of simply selecting names from a pre-entered list would save a fair degree of fooling around, or resorting to not keeping score.

The Pass The Mic mode is meant to allow for a more party-styled team play, but instead waffles through solo performances when it should be more based on the far more enjoyable Battle mode.

PUT ANOTHER DIME IN THE JUKEBOX, BABY

Being a sister company to one of the world's largest record labels can clearly have its perks when assembling a music game, as Sony has slapped together a truly

formidable line-up. Unlike most music games that boast a handful of tracks by their original artists with a plentiful offering of second-rate in-house songs, *SingStar* is nothing but authentic performances by instantly recognisable groups. Whether you're into the truly old-school like Petula Clark or Roy Orbison, or newer artists like the Sugababes or current star Jamelia, or Indeed

anywhere in between, you're more than covered. There are '70s disco icons Carl Douglas and the Village People, hard hitting rock legends Motorhead, modern dance diva Sophie Ellis Bextor and even the pop-punk princess Avril Lavigne. This large mixture of tracks means that even the fussiest music fans will find a few tracks among the collection that they'll instantly like.

As well as a variety of genres, there's also a wide range of difficulties between the tracks. Good Charlotte's "Girls and Boys" is a relatively monotone track that most won't struggle with, but A-Ha's "Take On Me" and "I Believe in A Thing Called Love" by The Darkness will surely test the range of





...AND THE BEAT GOES ON

Sony have dropped several strong hints that they'll be supporting SingStar in the future. With further discs potentially on their way, here's just some tracks OPS2 would like to see!

"When the Going Gets Tough" by Billy Ocean
 "The Greatest Love of All" by Whitney Houston
 "Killing in the Name" by Rage Against the Machine
 "Sweet Child O' Mine" by Guns 'N' Roses
 "Don't Call Me Dude" by Scatterbrain
 "Detachable Penis" by King Missile
 "Push the Little Daisies" by Ween
 "Sunday Bloody Sunday" by U2
 "I Remember You" by Skid Row
 "Anarchy in the UK" by Sex Pistols
 "Know How" by Koolhaas
 "Beds are Burning" by Midnight Oil
 "Back in Black" by AC/DC
 "Cabron" by Red Hot Chili Peppers
 "Cherry Pie" by Warrant
 "Bad" by Michael Jackson

anyone that isn't a classically trained soprano or hasn't been kicked in the happy sack a dozen times. (Note that *Official PlayStation 2 Magazine* doesn't condone asking your friends to snap-kick you in the crotch for the sole purpose of getting high scores on *SingStar*.)

The weakness of the track listing is that, no matter what your tastes, there are going to be a few songs that pull up short in your opinion. In particular, some of the tracks that could have been a real cornerstone for the game just ended up being a bit of a dud. For example, the Elvis song could have been any of a number of his hits that are a sure-fire opener for any karaoke session. With one of his – in our opinion – weaker tracks, "Suspicious Minds", being selected, one can only draw the conclusion that it was picked to make a saving on royalties.

ALL EYEZ ON ME

For those packing an EyeToy, you can even do away with the imagery of hunky rock stars and sassy pop queens and star in the film clips yourself. While for the most part, it'll just be yourself lounging on your couch, you'll also be treated to a variety of effects including image blurs, mirror balls, colour inversions and flames a la EyeToy Groove that will have any ordinary person on their feet doing Elvis-style karate kicks in no time. As an added bonus, there are a series of small replays available at the end of the song to check out, albeit without the effects.

On the down side, these replays are usually placed at regular intervals through the song and, more often than not, five out of the 10 replays are just the singer belting out the bridge over and over. With a little more strategic placement, and the option of effects, they could have been a bit more interesting. Due to the space required to store video clips with sound, the replays cannot be saved, and can only be enjoyed in the short term, so are lost as soon as you select another song.

The revolutionary change to your usual dose of PS2 entertainment that comes with *SingStar* is that gameplay is no longer about joystick skills. To play *SingStar*, you don't need to know the precise timing for a 10-hit combo, let alone one end of a Dual Shock from the other. Unlike most other music games, you

don't need expensive custom controllers or to risk your life on crappy, slippery dance mats. All that is required is a set of vocal chords and the ability to hold a note (and a microphone). To this end, anybody at all can play, whether it's five-year-old Suzie or your groovy grandma. The track listing covers a broad spectrum and serves to extend this wide appeal.

STAGE FRIGHT

Conversely, you'll probably find that about half of any group of people are horrified of singing in front of others, and will only punch out a tune in the shower, or at gunpoint. The fact that they're secretly a virtuoso that could belt out Bocchini to make Pavarotti green with envy has nothing to do with it. These people are not fun to play *SingStar* with, so either get a bit of Dutch courage into them, or find a more laidback, fun bunch to party with.

All the minor niggles aside, *SingStar* is a riotously fun party game, and when you consider that it's bundled with two quality microphones (that can be used independently of the game) for the same price as an average game, it's a sweet deal. Combine it with a room full of mates after a night out, and it's a recipe for utter hilarity and amusement for anyone with a voice box.

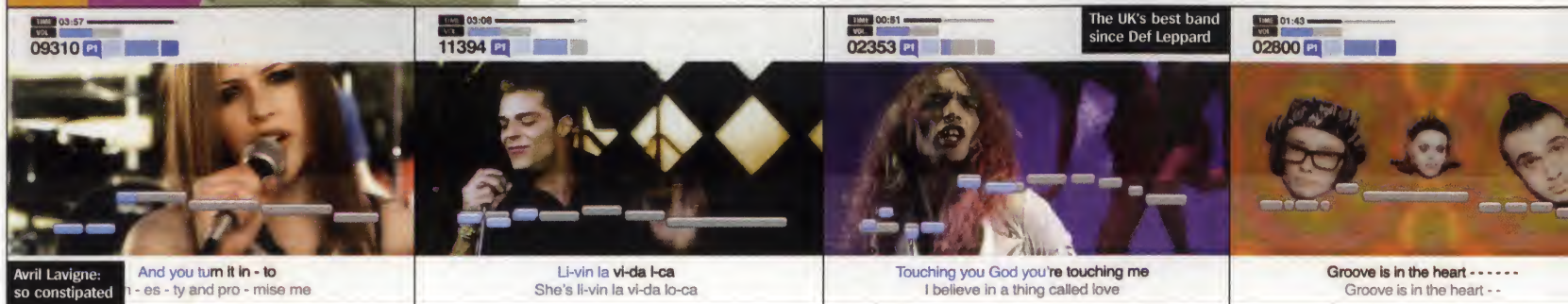
Without doubt, this new gem is set to change your loungeroom forever and, we reckon, is destined to make a big mark in PlayStation 2 history! If you think you've got tonsils of gold, or have ever dreamed of being a rock star, then stop strumming that tennis racquet, put down the hair spray and fire up some *SingStar*. Right now! Who knows, you might even discover some hidden talent you didn't know you had. Encore! **Nick O'Shea**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	09	Clean, crisp presentation with authentic film clips
Sound	09	Thirty tracks performed by the original artists
Gameplay	08	Makes a great game out of the usual sing-along
Lifespan	07	Definitely a party game

Karaoke with an edge. Settle those household arguments now – who really is the best (or worst) singer?

09



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*1 game for every month for one year. Offer for demo redemption ends 18-June-2004



THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

HITMAN: CONTRACTS

The Ice Man of cold-blooded killers cometh back again

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: **ATARI**
 DEVELOPER: **IO INTERACTIVE**
 PRICE: **\$99.95**
 PLAYERS: **1**
 OUT: **NOW**
 WEBSITE:
WWW.HITMANCONTRACTS.COM
 60HZ MODE: **YES**
 WIDESCREEN: **YES**
 SURROUND SOUND: **YES**
 ONLINE: **NO**

BACK STORY

Taking a break after Hitman 2, IO Interactive pumped out the very respectable Freedom Fighters before returning to the Hitman games. Freedom Fighters was published by EA but Hitman: Contracts returns to its old home at Atari. IO has already confirmed the development of Hitman 4.

Life's not going so well for our old pal, agent 47. He's doing marginally better than agents 1-46 because he's still alive, but things are far from peachy. Crawling across the floor of a grubby hotel room in a pool of his own blood, we find 47 struggling to stay alive. As he drifts in and out of consciousness his nightmarish flashbacks become playable levels. You'll even get to play through some familiar sights from *Hitman* and *Hitman 2*.

Events kick off in a top-secret research lab. As 47 staggers around he encounters corpse after corpse. The kicker is that they're all his clones. There's a decapitated 47 look-a-like over there, one in the corner and a bullet-riddled one that you're stepping over. As well as all the bodies there's also rows of huge liquid-filled tubes containing failed clone experiments. Walking through this graveyard puts you on edge and works well as a way to set up the sequel's much darker flavour.

THE PROFESSIONAL

Keeping a low profile and being as sneaky as possible is what the bald man's all about. Sticking to the shadows, only attacking enemies when they're alone and getting close enough to rub out your target without being detected always leads to more satisfying kills than simply running in and shooting anything that moves.

The arctic Russian base provides a perfect example of *Hitman*'s style. After stowing away onboard a cargo plane, 47 finds himself in the middle of a military base. It's tempting to pull out the pistols and go all "John Woo" on their arses but it's much more effective to bide your

time and wait for one of the soldiers to return to the plane and start unloading another box of groceries. By persuading the soldier to 'take two bullets and call the coroner in the morning', 47 can drag the body inside the plane, change into his uniform, pick up the groceries and head for the base's mess hall undetected.

Luckily, 47's target (a Russian officer) is sitting at one of the tables. However, there are still too many soldiers present to try anything. A quick search of the kitchen reveals a boiling pot of soup and some laxatives. Draining the laxatives into the soup and sneaking off is the way to go here because the officer will soon order soup. Shortly after eating it he'll begin sweating and groaning. As soon as he makes a dash for the toilet it's time for 47 to make his move. 47 heads to the loo to find the officer making some nasty noises in one of the stalls. Putting him out of his misery and changing into the his (hopefully not too smelly) clothes allows 47 to complete his job and escape.

HE WAS SUCH A QUIET BOY...

Believe it or not, 47's not the only nasty character dealing out the death in the game. During a mission to assassinate the Meat King we stumbled across his 'slightly' troubled brother. The brother has a habit of forgetting to wear his pants and walking around in nothing but a butcher's apron. His cheeky fashion sense is the least of his troubles though. We found the sicko in a slaughterhouse room with the body of his last victim hanging upside down from a chain. It was far from the nicest game environment we've seen but after a quick

BETTER THAN

HITMAN 2

WORSE THAN

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL

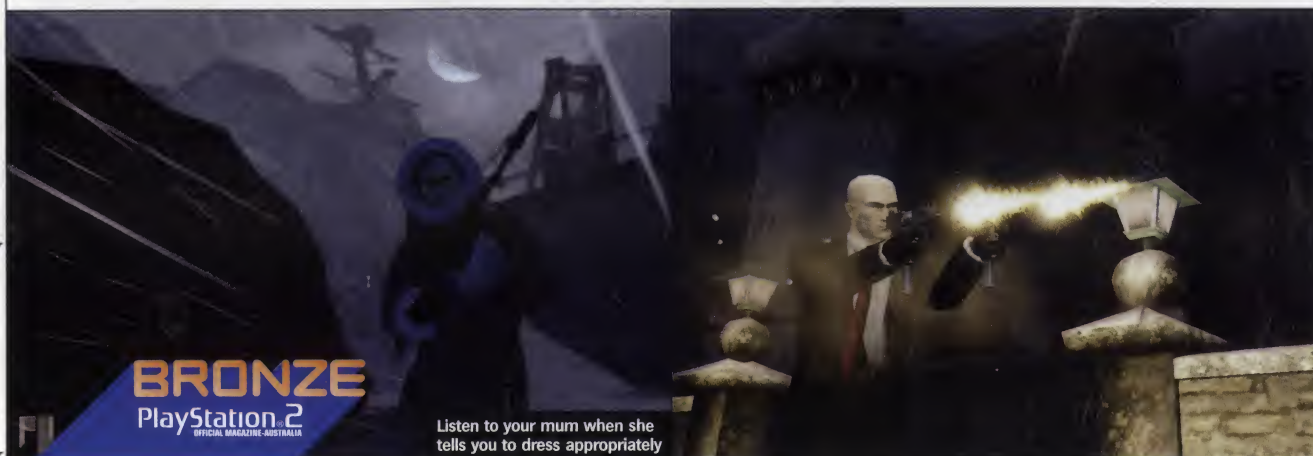
LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Being a psychopath. Sickos, form an orderly line

What they need to fix

The balance. It's still too easy to go in guns blazing



The balance between gunplay and stealth isn't quite right

PLAY-TEST

47 wears a suit because of all the funerals he needs to attend

MEAT THE BOYS

Early on in the game you'll stumble across the boys who put the 'blood' back into blood sausages – the Meat King and his brother



THE MEAT KING

With the sort of body that'd make *Austin Powers'* Fat Bastard grimace, the Meat King is one of the game's less savoury characters. The front for his criminal organisation is a meatworks plant. He's even rumoured to have chopped his victims up and used them in his special mince pies. Tasty.



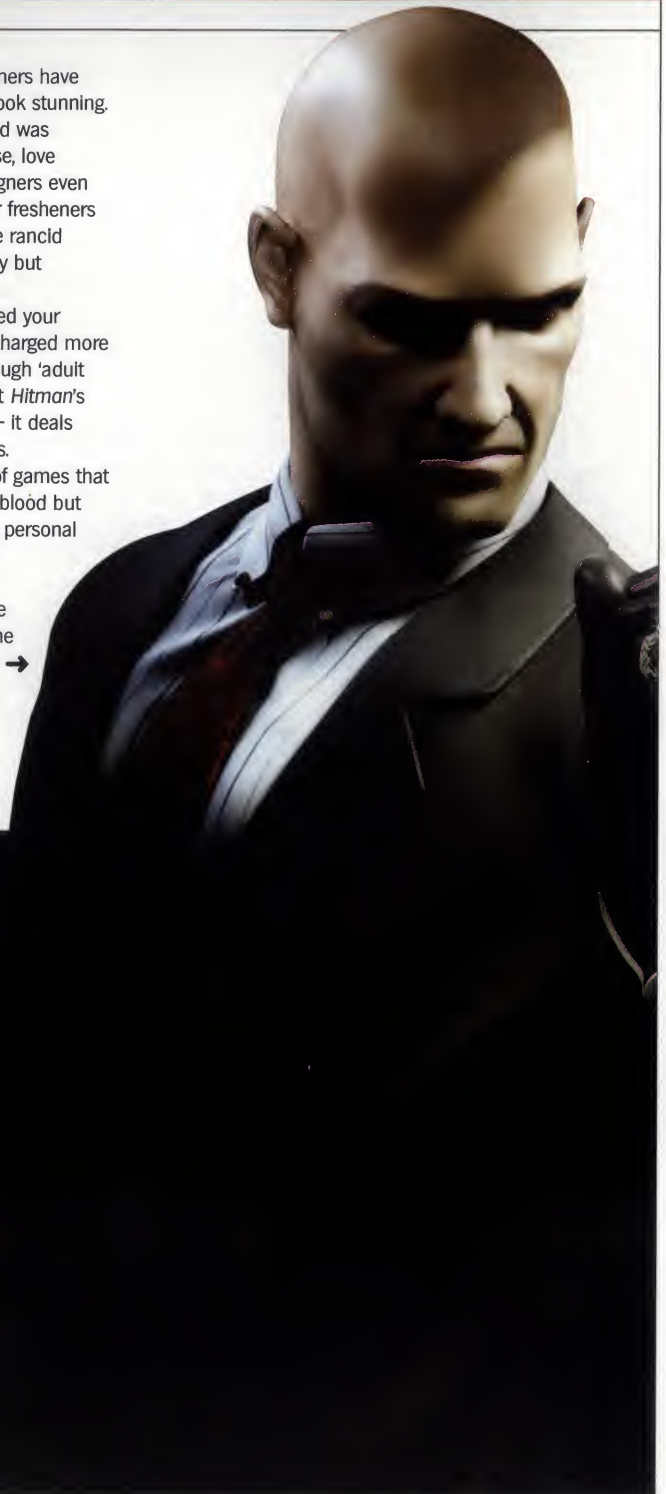
THE BROTHER

Making the fat man look like an upstanding member of society, the Meat King's brother is a severely disturbed individual who hangs out in the slaughterhouse, passing the time as a semi-naked serial killer. We just hope they don't employ this guy for the next season of *The Naked Chef*.

scan around it's clear that the game's designers have gone to a lot of trouble to make the game look stunning. The brother's shrine to the girl he'd just killed was decorated with photos, flowers and, of course, love poems finger painted in her blood. The designers even thought of including a bunch of pine tree air fresheners hanging from the ceiling to help disguise the rankid smell of his earlier victims. It's sick and nasty but impressively detailed all the same.

Before the game is up you'll have changed your appearance more times than Madonna, discharged more guns than the Victorian police and had enough 'adult fun' to make Jenna Jameson blush. But *Hitman's* 'adult fun' isn't of the naked variety – it deals purely with loads of violent deaths.

We've played plenty of games that have dished out buckets of blood but *Hitman's* violence is more personal and more powerful than anything this side of *Manhunt*. When you're playing a game like *Vice* →



→ City it doesn't matter how many bodies you fill with lead, there's a comical, arcade feel to the action that stops anyone from taking it too seriously.

In *Hitman* you often find yourself studying a target's behaviour for minutes, looking for a weak spot in their behaviour. Or you might disguise yourself and walk behind them, trying to act casual as they keep looking over their shoulder at you. Then, when they walk around a corner you pull out your silenced pistol and shoot them in the back of the head. It's this stalking that makes the deaths more disturbing than your average videogame.

And it doesn't stop there! As soon as an enemy receives a killing blow – whether it be from a bullet, a meat cleaver or a wire garrote – their bodies crumple to the ground with startling realism. Rag doll physics are used to show bodies reacting to whatever objects they hits. Bodies will slump back into chairs, against walls and over railings with convincing realism. This all stacks up to an experience that leaves you feeling more than a tad dirty. Yep, it's just a game but it's still a fairly realistic simulation of being an assassin.

KEEP IT CLEAN

The blood pumping through 47's veins may be well below freezing but he's not a *complete* psychopath. The game encourages you to only kill your targets and keep collateral damage to an absolute minimum. To get a perfect rating in any mission you want to sneak in, kill the target and sneak out again. Firing unnecessary shots, alerting guards and killing innocent



general call has been given to look for a "suspicious bald man", and they spot you as a fake instantly if you happen to be wearing the clothes of one of their close friends.

While all this sounds great, it can be pretty annoying. Your frustration soars when you're tooled up in the right gear and you still get spotted just because some guard walking by reads your name tag and knows you're not Larry. When your cover is blown and you shoot the guard who caught you, sometimes a general alarm will be raised and sometimes you'll be able to hide the body and continue without a problem. Random events like this may be realistic but they're definitely not fun. In future, please ditch the random AI and steal

"THE DEATHS ARE MORE DISTURBING THAN YOUR AVERAGE VIDEOGAME"

people all drag your rating down.

There are many tactics you'll need to employ to get good assassin ratings. Avoiding contact with other people as much as possible is the first rule. When you do have to walk near people, do it in disguise and make sure you don't do anything suspicious like break into a jog or pull out a weapon. When you get near the target you'll then have to scout around and use a bit of lateral thinking to figure out a way to kill them.

If you're spotted when you're in a guard's field of view, the alarm will be raised and your cover will be blown. Gun-toting guards will be dispatched and for the rest of the mission you'll be fired upon on sight (unless you can find a disguise that covers your face).

The theory behind the artificial intelligence of the guards looks good on paper. They are clever enough to pick up on it if you are carrying the wrong sort of weapon for your uniform or if your uniform doesn't grant you access to the area you are in. You'll be recognised as a threat even if you are in uniform if a

Metal Gear Solid 2's radio system.

Don't let this negativity turn you off *Hitman: Contracts* though. Apart from the slightly funky AI it's a rip-snorter of a shooter. Anyone with a strong constitution and questionable morals should pull on their knee-high gumboots and wade into *Hitman's* river of blood. **Narayan Pattison**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Some drab backgrounds but great animations
Sound	09	Moody classical music and perfect gunshot effects
Gameplay	08	Occasionally frustrating but very clever
Lifespan	07	Not the longest game but multiple paths help

Patient assassins will be rewarded with creative gameplay but action junkies might find the pace slow.

08

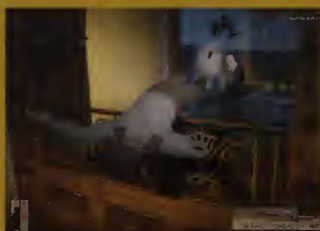
THE FALL GUY

Hitman: Contracts uses the most advanced ragdoll physics engine we've seen in a game to ensure that those polygons fly, roll and crumple just like a real dead body should. We've never worked in a funeral parlour before, but we're convinced!



YOUR COVER'S BLOWN

Offering to let him wax your head isn't likely to do the trick. It's time for a little Dirty Harry. Don't forget the silencer though.



LOOK AT THOSE PHYSICS GO

There's no invisible wall behind that railing. The body crumples back over it and prepares to do a backwards spinning pike.



THE LIGHTS ARE ON UPSTAIRS...

Now they're showing off the lighting as well as the physics. We sure hope he's got a stack hat stashed under that silly little Tweed cap.



THAT'S GOT TO HURT

He must have forgotten to wear one today. That's what you get for messing with 47, you turtleneck-wearing slissy boy!



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VS.

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This is just the start of an awesome range of Network Entertainment titles on the way.

Games subject to availability. Check with your retailer for release dates and final game classification.

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Real opponents. Infinite possibilities.



PlayStation 2
NETWORK ENTERTAINMENT



RACING SIM

GT4: PROLOGUE

The demo of all demos is here

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: SONY
DEVELOPER: POLYPHONY DIGITAL
PRICE: \$59.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: MAY
WEBSITE: WWW.PLAYSTATION.JP /SCEJ/TITLE/GT4P/
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: YES
SURROUND SOUND: YES
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Originally only due for release in Japan, GT4: Prologue was granted a worldwide release following the delay of Gran Turismo 4's full release. The full version isn't due now until Christmas. Boo-hoo!

Finally, it's back! Well, not really... *Gran Turismo 4* is here but the *Prologue* edition is kind of like the support act before the headlining band hits the stage and tears the house down. But, with the recent announcement that GT4 will be delayed until later in the year, it appears as though the support act will be holding the stage for quite some time. Luckily the price is right and there's enough junk in the trunk to keep GT fans' motors running for the next few months.

It appears that the digital mechanics at Polyphony have been very busy since GT3 fine-tuning every single detail to make GT4 even more realistic than its predecessor. While *Prologue* only gives us a glimpse of what we can expect, you can make a calculated guess that GT4 will not only blow away *Prologue* but also every other racer currently sitting on store shelves.

As you no doubt know, one of the GT series' major strengths has always been its visuals, and *Prologue* is certainly no different. Proving that it's still the cat's pajamas of eye candy, it features graphics as realistic as

anything we've seen on the PS2. The graphics are so good you could swear you were watching video footage!

And in maintaining their fine reputation, the cars have also been captured perfectly by the Polyphony team. Not only has every featured vehicle been modelled accurately right down to its mudflaps, but if you've ever had the luxury of sitting in the driver's seat of a Toyota MR2 GT-5 '98 or a Subaru Impreza Sedan WRX '99 then you'll immediately reminisce about what it was like to be in control of one of these beasts. Every single one of the 50 vehicles in *Prologue* looks and handles just like its real world counterpart. But if you think that's impressive then just think about the fact that the full version of GT4 will feature 500 (yes, five hundred) cars and every single one of those is expected to handle like the real thing.

Staying on the topic of reality, *Need For Speed: Underground* and *Burnout* fans will need to alter their driving style drastically if they want to avoid the dreaded fence here. Just like real life, there's little to no room for error in *Prologue*. If you turn sharply while accelerating, your tyres will start smoking like you're at Summerhats;

BETTER THAN
GRAN TURISMO CONCEPT
WORSE THAN
GRAN TURISMO 3

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The graphics are breathtaking. It's amazing what's been achieved

What they need to fix

Damage to the cars. Let us smash things up a bit!



Kieran Perkins will have to look elsewhere as there won't be a 'celebrity' race mode



BRONZE
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE - AUSTRALIA



Car models are looking so authentic, you'll feel like you can't afford them

"JUST LIKE IN REAL LIFE, THERE'S LITTLE TO NO ROOM FOR ERROR IN *PROLOGUE*"

slam on the brakes and you'll stop dead in your tracks – and don't even think about taking a corner too fast or you'll go bumper-first into the barrier. You won't smash your car up though. As with other *Gran Turismo* games, there's absolutely no way to damage your car in *Prologue*. Believe us, we tried. We know some gamers who prefer "no damage", but we still think this is the one flaw of the *GT* games (particularly when the rest of the game is so realistic) – and it looks set to continue. Instead, Polyphony has thrown in a feature where if you smash into a wall at high speeds then you'll receive a penalty that will force you to drive in first gear for 10 seconds.

LIMITED FEATURES

Only two driving modes are featured in *Prologue* – Arcade and School. The Arcade mode features five tracks, with only 12 vehicles available at the beginning, made up of 10 regular road vehicles and two rally cars. You'll have to go through School mode to unlock the other 38 cars. While *Gran Turismo* fans will remember Arcade mode as the ultimate for multiplayer racing, *Prologue* will crush your memories under a set of racing-grade tyres. While cruising around these tracks is fantastic, the fact there is no multiplayer mode leaves a bad taste in any fan's mouth. *Gran Turismo* has always been all about racing. You can still race against CPU cars in the Arcade mode

AROUND THE WORLD

Prologue features a tantalising five of the 50 tracks that will be in the full version of *GT4*. While there are 45 still to come, we can confirm that those that have made the cut are absolutely stunning. Let's take a quick look.



TSUKABA CIRCUIT

Not much to see, but you will find yourself here a lot in School mode.



FUJI SPEEDWAY

A step up from Tsukaba, but basically just another School track.



CITTA DI ARIA

If you've seen the car chases in *Ronin* then you will love this track.



NEW YORK

A fine looker, but quiet for one of the busiest cities in the world.



GRAND CANYON

Fans will try and get a photo of you but you can't run them over...



"GT4 PROLOGUE IS AN EXCLUSIVE 'ADVANCED SKILLS SCHOOL', DESIGNED WITH THE MOST AMBITIOUS DRIVERS IN MIND. IT PROVIDES AN OPPORTUNITY TO PREPARE FOR THE IMMINENT CHALLENGE OF GT4 - AN ESSENTIAL TEST-DRIVE FOR POTENTIAL CHAMPIONS."

Kayvan Jamnani

but you'll have to turn the feature on in options first. Miss this option and it's nothing but time trials for you.

You'll get plenty of practise in School mode as well. School mode is exactly like the usual GT license tests but with the challenges instead displayed as a board game - and the lessons are much harder. You don't need to be Peter Brock to pick up the bronze but you will need to put the pedal to the metal if you have a gold fetish. Either way, you get to unlock a car after completing each lesson, even if you're unlikely to use the majority of them.

Each lesson kicks off with an introduction movie showing you how it's done, but Polyphony has also slapped a dotted line on the track to further assist you. The line changes colour depending on the situation and the car you're in. When you see a red line you need to brake, when it's grey you need to take your finger off the accelerator, and if it's blue you need to floor it. It does take some getting used to though.

SOLO PERFORMANCE

As we've mentioned, the multiplayer feature is, like a cigarette lighter in a new Holden Commodore: non-existent! The game does record all your lap times though, so the best way to have fun with other rev-heads is a game of "who can do the fastest lap". With previous GT titles featuring multiplayer and the full version of GT4 guaranteeing full online play, we're left wondering why we didn't get a better sneak peak at it. The absence of multiplayer leaves us even more excited about multiplayer in GT4, but still

extremely disappointed we don't get to check it out for six months!

So, if you're a GT freak desperate to get a head-start, *Prologue* is the perfect way to start honing your skills. But it does have a distinct feel of being a demo. To make the package sweeter, the price is a wallet-friendly \$59.95 and comes packaged with a free DVD about the making of the Big Kahuna - GT4. Casual Turismos should wait for the real deal but serious racers will lap this up. **Paul Frew**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	10	You need to see it to believe it
Sound	08	The cars sound great but the soundtrack disappoints
Gameplay	09	Just as good as you remember it
Lifespan	06	Once you've beaten school mode, there's little left

Will definitely keep racing freaks happy until *Gran Turismo 4* hits shelves later in the year.

08

**FELIX DA HOUSECAT
QUENTIN TARANTINO
FAITHLESS
RICHARD X
BEASTIE BOYS
UMA THURMAN
ROBERT RODRIGUEZ
BUNGY JUMPING
SNOWBOARDING
IN ASPEN
TAJ BURROW
MADONNA
PHIL K
GADGETS
FASHION
FREE MIX CD
ALL THIS AND
MORE IN YOUR
FAVOURITE MUSIC MAG...**



ON SALE NOW



ACTION RPG

DRAKENGARD

Killin' stuff on a draconian scale

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2
 DEVELOPER: SQUARE/CAVIA
 PRICE: \$99.95
 PLAYERS: 1
 OUT: NOW
 WEBSITE: WWW.DRAKENGARD.EUROPE.COM
 60HZ MODE: NO
 WIDESCREEN: NO
 SURROUND SOUND: YES
 ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Japanese developer Cavia Inc. was formed in March 2000, and has been developing Drakengard pretty much ever since. You could be forgiven for not having heard of them – they have primarily created Japanese-release only games, but are also co-creators of Resident Evil: Dead Aim.

For all you Square fans who were horribly disappointed by the lack of seriousness in *Final Fantasy X-2*, *Drakengard* may be the answer to your prayers. In fact, this could be Square's darkest ever adventure.

The game begins amid high turmoil. Two warring factions – the Union and the Empire – are fighting for possession of the land's most precious treasure: the living embodiment of the goddess Furlae, currently in the clutches of the Empire.

Union supporter Caim, royal young 'un and brother to the goddess, is rushing to her aid when he's struck a fatal blow by a nasty Empire soldier. In heroic style, he fights his way to the castle where his sister is being held, where he finds a captured (and dying) dragon. The pair, fighting down their mutual revulsion – one for the beasts that killed his parents, the other for the men that populate the land – make a pact, whereby their lives (and strength) are joined. One might think that, this wouldn't do much good, but lol – they both rise up to bring some pact-hurt to their enemies. Seeming to forget all about poor old Furlae along the way...

Of course, every bargain has its price. Caim can no longer speak. But since all he did before losing his voice was whinge and moan, most of us won't consider this a terrible loss. It's a shame all the other characters have to whine so much in his stead. But the whining is where the similarity to more traditional Square RPG characterisation ends. The driving force behind Caim's obsessive quest to bring the Empire to its knees is a deep, abiding hatred that excludes almost everything else. This is to be found in every aspect of the gameplay, from the nasty way Caim has with a sword, to the cut-scenes, where Caim stands darkly glowering and

contemplating the next bloodbath while everyone else around him laments their circumstances.

GRAPHIC CONTENT

And oh, there's blood in plenty. For every enemy that Caim cuts down, a shower of blood splatters the ground, and every time Caim takes a hit, blood sprays. You can turn this option off if it doesn't appeal to you, but given the number of enemies – literally hundreds every mission – you'll scarcely notice it after a while; and given the story's content, it hardly seems worth the bother.

Graphically, while the game has all of Square's usual finesse, the spartan battlegrounds and the monsters with which they teem – from soldiers to pig-men to small blonde children – can only have come from new development team Cavia. The environments themselves are utilitarian at best, and not interactive in the least.

Bleak and sparse, their only purpose is to provide an area in which the battling can take place. It may be simple, but it's effective – you get the strong sense that this, indeed, is a land that's been at war for years.

The character models are a little more decorative. Furlae sports Square's generic kind of ethereal beauty, but Caim

BLOODY RADARS AND DEAD BODIES!

One good thing about all that blood is that it makes it quite easy to tell whether or not a dude is dead. The enemies also have little health meters above their heads, and you have a little counter in the bottom right corner to let you know how many of the baddies you've offed so far, so you can feel like a real badass when it hits 800. One thing you will have to watch is your radar in the top-right. The pop-up is quite bad, and enemies just sort of "appear" when they're in your immediate vicinity, but watching the radar will help you keep track of who's about.



BETTER THAN

REIGN OF FIRE

WORSE THAN

DYNASTY WARRIORS

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

It isn't often that you come across a game story this freaky

What they need to fix

Enemy AI would be nice Man, those guys are DUMB



Dragon: not just antique
Aussie rockersIT'S LIKE NEW-YEAR'S EVE, ONLY
WITH PAINFUL FIERY DEATH

No, that's not mutant dragon vomit. Except for the talking, the dragon behaves just like any other weapon. It levels up, and increases in attack strength and appearance, just like the other weapons in the game. And, like the other weapons, she can release a super-powerful magical attack – a long jet of flame in Strafe mode and jets of plasma in Dogfight mode. You can't just fire these off constantly though – you have to recharge your magic bar by hitting your foes with regular attacks.



"Look, I told you this morning: I didn't bring any money today"

himself is not the pretty-boy you might expect, and none of the male characters could pass as girls if they wore frocks. The game is brutal and the attire and appearance of Caim is a testament to this – even if those black jeans are a tad '80s.

RIDING THE GAUNTLET

The gameplay mechanics are pretty much a combination of *Dynasty Warriors* and Sega's *Panzer Dragoon*. There are three gameplay modes – Dogfight, Strafe and Mêlée – and they're all about mass killin'.

is upgradeable, and can increase significantly in size and attack power. Of course, while in Strafe mode, only the dragon gains experience points; Caim does not.

Finally, Dogfight mode takes place at high altitudes, from the back of the dragon – alluding strongly to *Panzer Dragoon*. With a full, three-dimensional range of motion, the dragon fires balls of flame at airborne enemies, while twisting and turning to avoid returning fire. This flying combat can get quite tricky with enemies attacking on all sides, making this mode the least repetitive but most complicated.

"THERE ARE 65 WEAPONS TO
COLLECT AND EVERY ONE OF
THEM CAN BE UPGRADED"

The predominant mode is Mêlée, and it is exactly what it sounds like. You'll hack and slash your way through hordes of enemies by hammering **Ⓢ**. It sounds tedious, and it can get that way, but there is, after all, something to be said for mindless slaughter, especially in the quantities you get in this game. The variation on the battlefield lies in the weapons. There are 65 to collect, and every one of them can be upgraded. Also, each weapon has a different magical attack, and its own specific advantages and disadvantages. For example, a short-ranged weapon might be faster, but is seriously lacking in the attack power, meaning that the mission could take much longer – an important point, since each mission has a strict time limit.

Strafe mode is Caim's strong point. During ground battles, he can call upon his dragon to fly low over the field and eliminate troublesome foes. The dragon, also,

YOUR MOTHER WEARS ARMY BOOTS

The most disconcerting aspect is the seemingly random pearls of wisdom that the other characters drop on you through voice-overs. Quite aside from the fact that the voice acting is woeful, some of it appears to have no point whatsoever – such as when the dragon proclaims, "Do they possess the darkness? Or does it possess them? No matter – they shall die!" (thanks for that, dragon), and the rest, including disturbing insinuations about Caim's relationship with his sister.

Drakengard shouldn't take more than about 15 hours of dedicated play to complete, and its only real claim to RPG-dom is the upgradeable/collectible system, but it provides a nice, bloodthirsty arena for your frustrations. While it's not quite as slick as *Dynasty Warriors* or *Panzer Dragoon*, the occasionally rocky gameplay is made up for by the twisted storyline. **A** Michelle Starr

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	A few frame rate and camera issues
Sound	06	Terrible voice-acting; nice music, but a little overkill
Gameplay	07	Watch out for RSI
Lifespan	06	There are possibly TOO many weapons to collect

Repetitive and simplistic gameplay make this game little more than a brawler, but it is addictively appealing.

07



Red tries flexing his muscles to scare off the gunslinger



THIRD-PERSON SHOOTER

RED DEAD REVOLVER

All the grit and gunpowder of the wild west, without the saddle sores

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: TAKE 2

DEVELOPER:
ROCKSTAR SAN DIEGO

PRICE: \$99.95

PLAYERS: 1-4

OUT: NOW

WEBSITE: WWW.ROCKSTARGAMES.COM/REDDEADREVOLVER/

60HZ MODE: YES

WIDESCREEN: YES

SURROUND SOUND: YES

ONLINE: TBC

BACK STORY

Previously known as Angel Studios, Rockstar San Diego was responsible for two Smuggler's Run games and two Midnight Club. Red Dead Revolver was originally going to be published by Capcom, but Rockstar bought out the developer and brought its own cool style to the project.

The western. It's not exactly an overcrowded genre. In fact, when pressed we couldn't think of any on PS2, and could only remember one PSone game – *Lucky Luke*.

Considering *Lucky Luke* was a children's cartoon, that makes *Red Dead Revolver* the only grown-up western game in years (unless you count the thousands of PC trivia programs bashed together by bored Texan nerds).

In typical western style, the game begins with Red's parents being butchered in front of him. Naturally the youngster tries to avenge them but gets batted aside by the ruffians. The next time we see Red he's been forged into a 'tough enough to make Clint Eastwood his bitch' gunslinger, and he's on the warpath.

If there's an action scene you can remember from an old western then there's a safe bet it's in this game. Classic gunfights in the dusty main street of town – check. Thrashing your horse to catch up to a speeding train – check. Climbing up a narrow canyon path as you track down a gang of mangy stealing dogs – check.

And once you fight your way through a level you better believe there'll be one tough hombre at the end, just waiting to snap you in half like a toothpick in a vice. Before you've even gotten comfy in your chair you will have beaten a bull-sized gunfighter who carries the sheriff around as a human shield and a lobotomised

circus freak with TNT strapped to his chest. Of course, you can't just shoot circus boy because he carries thick metal shields. The only way to get anywhere is to give him the slip, then unload your bullets into his flabby back when he's not looking. A few of the other nasties you'll need to collect bounty on include a walking zombie who carries a Gatling gun in his coffin and a lively lass who handles her whip as well as the madam Ed visits every Thursday night.

QUICK AND THE DEAD

The 'meat and potatoes' of any western are the gunfights, and Rockstar has clearly put a lot of effort into getting them right. Red can somersault behind cover, pop out for a quick headshot, then be back behind cover before his enemy's blood hits the dirt. Red will face overwhelming odds but in keeping with the mentality of Clint Eastwood's *The Unforgiven*, staying cool and having a steady hand will see you through any gunfight. It's not uncommon for Red to face off against five thugs at once and be able to calmly shoot each of them without suffering anything worse than a couple of flesh wounds. The key is to go for headshots. While it can take up to eight body shots to kill an enemy, a headshot will drop them instantly every time.

Delivering a headshot in this game is a thing of gory beauty. As the pistol shot echoes around the canyon your foe will yelp in pain as he crumples to the ground with

BETTER THAN

ENTER THE MATRIX

WORSE THAN

DEVIL MAY CRY

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Balls-out action and the fun-packed wild west style

What they need to fix

The graphics – we don't need this much grit



"What?! It's the personality that counts!" This is what happened to the last girl who made fun of Red's little cowboy

BRONZE
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE AUSTRALIA

YOUNG GUNS

To mix the action up a little in *Red Dead Revolver* there are a handful of other characters who all have their own playable chapters. Here's a bunch of the hired guns on offer.



GENERAL DIEGO

He may be Red's nemesis but that doesn't mean you can't play the General in a flashback episode. His special ability sees him fire a flare at a target. It may sound pansy but what happens next isn't – the area he marks is destroyed by cannon fire from his army.



JACK SWIFT

A nimble gunslinger, Jack may look like an old doctor but the only prescription he gives out is for lead poisoning. His twin pistols pack an impressive special ability. When charged up they can be used to instantly lock on to 12 targets to unleash a fury of bullets.



ANNIE STOKES

Annie was just a quiet farm girl before her property was ransacked by thieves. She defends herself with a powerful rifle that can deliver explosive blasts. By hopping on one of her bulls (the four-legged kind) she can trample enemies or shoot from bull-back.



blood gushing from his forehead. Grisly, but satisfying.

For the ultimate in gunfighting glory, the game offers one-on-one duels. When you encounter key opponents the game will slow down and you'll need to flick your gun out of its holster and target your enemy with a lethal shot before they fire their gun.

Proving that being a lone ranger doesn't have to be as lonely as everyone thinks, Red mixes it up with a bunch of his buddies in the multiplayer mode. Up to four players can head down to the OK Corral for a boot skootin' shootout. Each player starts with their regular guns, but weapons can be strengthened with a series of power-ups like poison bullets and a vampire-like ability to steal an enemy's health with your shots. This multiplayer mode acts as a good incentive to go back into your beaten missions and get higher scores because there are multiple arenas and characters that can be unlocked. To make this mode even more accessible you can team up with friends or play it solo against computer-controlled bots.

THE GOOD, THE BAD & THE BLURRY

Bleached colours and a hazy filter do a good job of recreating the visual style of the sun-drenched old west. Cut-scenes go a step further by artificially inserting the specs of dirt and marks on the film that you'd expect to see in old archival footage.

There's no doubting the old-fashioned flavour that all the gritty and bleached filters give the graphics but they can't hide *Red Dead Revolver's* graphical misfires. Mosey on up to any object and you'll discover some of the blurriest textures we've ever seen the PS2 pump out. As ridiculous as this may sound, the game is sometimes

indistinguishable from the granddaddy of all blurry graphics – the Nintendo 64.

We know that the old west was ugly but the characters in this game must have been beaten with a whole forest of ugly sticks. If you imagine the old *Grand Theft Auto 3* characters – but with a few random polygons lopped off here and there – then you'd have a good idea of these blocky beasts. The graphical weaknesses give the game a bit of a retro feel that fits in with the old west but we still would have preferred some 2004-style crisp textures and realistic 3D characters.

After a bit of a stumble with the graphics, Red gets back on the horse with the game's audio. Thanks to Dolby Digital this and THX that, we're getting pretty used to real-life sound effects in games. We're not sure how, but Rockstar has managed to take it to a new level, with the sort of pistol shots that fill the room with gun smoke and leave powder burns on your hands. Hook this game up to a nice sub woofer and you'll need seatbelts on your lounge to keep you from being blown across the room.

The game's superb soundtrack also deserves a mention. If it were any more spaghetti western, you'd be reaching for the meatballs. Just try and stop yourself whistling along as you reload your pistols.

While too many games are getting caught up in relentless realism, *Red Dead Revolver* gets back to the ingredients of old-school gaming action. It packs more frantic action into each mission than some titles have in an entire game, and still has time for pistol duels, train chases and bull riding. The graphics might have gotten a little too carried away with the old-school style but that just gives you an excuse to wear a pair of sunnies while you play. It's all good. **Narayan Pattison**



"Your baby eatin' days are over, Porky"

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	05	Super stylish one moment, hideous the next
Sound	10	Best gunshots ever and great music
Gameplay	08	Straightforward, but immensely exciting and playable
Lifespan	08	Plenty of rewards will have you replaying missions

The classic western is resurrected with a double-barrelled dose of action and fun.

08

Red just don't seem to smile no more after his machete-juggling accident



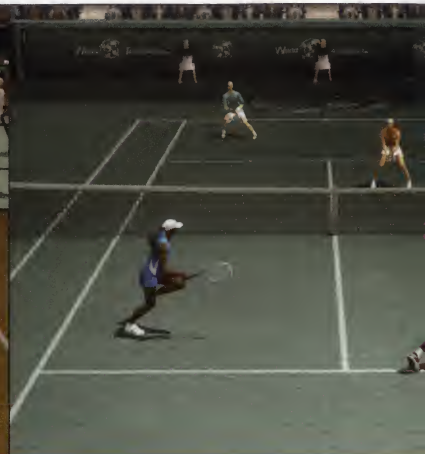
THE DEAD EYE OPENS

Our man Red's not too proud to take a little inspiration from *The Matrix's* Bullet Time. After killing a few men with regular shots his Dead Eye Meter will be filled up, allowing him to unleash a slow-motion super move. The action will slow to a crawl and the colour will fade to black and white as Red aims the six shots from his gun. Once all the targets have been set, a simple tap of the trigger will return the game to regular speed and unleash a rapid volley of gunfire at your foes.





"...and I'd like to thank my sister Venus, for being too crap to appear in this game"



TENNIS SIM

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT 2

Fun tennis is all about aiming for linesmen's crotches

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: **SONY**
 DEVELOPER: **NAMCO**
 PRICE: **\$99.95**
 PLAYERS: **1-4**
 OUT: **JUNE**
 WEBSITE: **WWW.NAMCO.COM**
 60HZ MODE: **YES**
 WIDESCREEN: **YES**
 SURROUND SOUND: **YES**
 ONLINE: **NO**

BACK STORY

Anna Kournikova's *Smash Court Tennis* was the first game in the series and came out on PSone. The PS2 follow-up, *Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament*, was released in 2002. This is the sequel - which is why it's got the same name but with a number '2' on the end.

BETTER THAN

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO

WORSE THAN

VIRTUA TENNIS 2

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Great roster of top-name players

What they need to fix

NICE shots! These powerful and vital strokes are too fluky

Does it smash or droop? Sizzle or fizzle? Hit or miss? *Pro Tournament 2* is another sporting sequel from game gurus Namco. So, all you tennis fans ask, is it the best, most absolutely smashillicious tennis game ever?

PT2 is all about a realistic interpretation of tennis. Unfortunately you'll not see any camera cutaways to tennis players' busty girlfriends, Cliff Richard singing in the stands or Lleyton Hewitt getting stuck on the bog due to a lack of toilet paper. No, we're talking on-court realism, with human players using racquets and skill to hit the ball back over the net like respectable mortals. This is not *Super Duper Plumber Tennis Fantasy 5*, where the evil end-of-tournament dragon boss can fire cross-court aces out of his ass.

There are some obvious benefits to this realism. Firstly the character roster within the game is damn impressive, including both the manly, big-hitting blokes, as well as the manly, big-hitting women. In most match types you're limited to playing within your gender, but in the Exhibition mode you'll be able to see Henman take on Serena Williams, or Haas size up against Capriati. Each pro possesses slightly different skills that

pigeonhole their style of play. For example, Marin Safat can produce powerful ground strokes whereas Andy Roddick has a ripper serve.

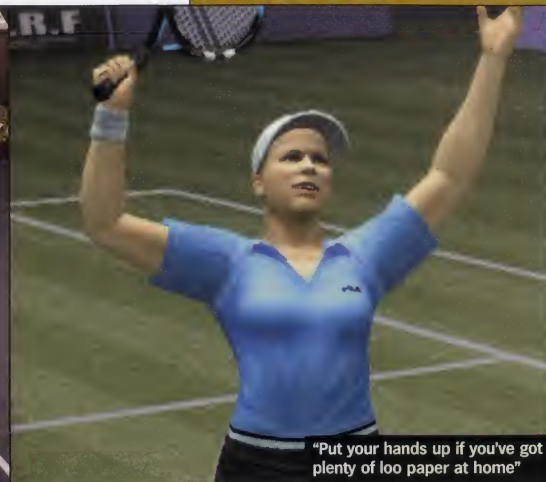
BE YOURSELF

If, for some reason, you hate the guts of everyone in professional tennis, perhaps out of jealousy of your own unappreciated talent, you can head on into the Pro Tour mode. Free from the self-absorbed personas of the sneaker-sponsored elite, you can create your own player from the ground up. The create-a-player options here are decent, and as you progress through the Tour more clothing and accessories open up.

Cutting straight to Namco's first missed point, the Pro Tour comes across as a failure. You have to spend ages engaging in banal training exercises, the odd overly difficult surprise practice match and a slew of minor tournaments before you can strive for the Grand Slams. This wouldn't be so bad if the minor tournaments actually played out like they should. Instead, you're zoomed to particular turning



We are assured that the grass will be grown in time for Athens to host a major tennis event



FOUR IS COMPANY

Fans of on-court multiplayer shenanigans can purchase this game knowing that their multi-taps will be put to good use. The game supports up to four players going head-to-head in doubles allowing you and a friend to challenge all takers and assert your domination as the next Australian Woodies. You can even play mixed doubles, meaning you're able to make a romantic pairing of Hewitt and his beau Kim Clijsters. No sign of Enrique Iglesias making a cameo to team up with Anna K.



played out like they should. Instead, you're zoomed to particular turning point within a match to play a couple of points before scooting to the next key moment. It's an interesting move but why the player can't play the whole thing is beyond us. Does Namco think tennis matches are boring? The Pro Tour mode is supposed to be the meat and potatoes, but it's more like half a meal.

All is not lost, however, if *PT2* plays a mean game of videogame tennis. Unfortunately "mean" is not really the word to describe *PT2* – it's more like "irritated". It has some good things going for it and some that are not so good. But let's dwell on the good for now... Every player can perform a nifty number of tennis shots to boss their opponent around the court and send them to Loserville. You've got top spin, slice, drop, running shot, volley, and lob shots all available and there's more variety to the game than some of its rival sims.

Say you're controlling our wonder boy Lleyton Hewitt – you'll play from the baseline and use your speed to run down every ball. You can fire down top spin shots to get the rally going, or easily add in a slice to bring your opponent to the net. If he tries to whack it down the line, a well-timed running shot will see you jump all over the ball and fire a winner down the sideline. It's almost as satisfying as a post-booze-up chicken kebab.

DAMN NICE SHOT

Now for the not so good. Apart from the shots mentioned above, you've also got a powerful flat shot that you can use to crack the ball at great speed. Why not use this all the time? Well, here's the thing. Each time you strike the ball in *PT2* a small spherical graphic comes up at the point where racquet meets ball. If it's a big circle you've produced a well-timed 'NICE' shot, as the game calls it. If you try to hit a flat shot but don't time it right, it'll go out about 70 per cent of the time. There are some problems with this. Firstly, good timing is all too hard to judge off a flat TV screen. It relies on you being in a good position in relation to where the ball has bounced and then timing your shot right. The flat-shot button quickly becomes the concede-a-point button. The computer, of course, has no trouble pumping out flat winners, and therefore becomes frustratingly difficult to beat. Compare this to simpler tennis games where power and placement are determined purely by how

much time you have on the ball to set up your shot – just like real tennis.

Like the gameplay, the presentation of *PT2* is a bit hit and miss. Character models look like their real-life counterparts and the animations are smooth and believable. The Hewitt fist pump, for instance, is here in all its unbridled glory along with accompanying "come on" soundbite. But the colours and backgrounds look washed-out and lifeless. Like any sports game involving one or two competitors, the visuals should be good enough to fool your grandparents into thinking they're watching the real thing on TV. The only people this'll fool are those with double cataracts (which, thinking about it, is most likely to be your grandparents). The sound effects aren't half-bad, though at some points the crowd comments lack the required reverberation.

Smash Court Tennis Pro Tournament 2 plays a decent game of tennis, but it's not the most enjoyable. With its difficult 'NICE' shots, drab colours and slow-paced Pro Tour mode, tennis fans would be better off going for the superior *Virtua Tennis 2*. **James Ellis**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Impressive animation but drab colours
Sound	05	Typically bad Japanese trash-rock soundtrack
Gameplay	07	At times decent, at other times frustrating
Lifespan	08	Cruddy pro mode, but supports four players

Not a bad tennis game by any stretch. Unfortunately we wanted to see a few more aces served up.

07



When are knee-high socks going to be given the boot?

This guy sure likes to play with his balls

SOCCER-SIM

UEFA EURO 2004

EA never misses an opportunity to score

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: EA
DEVELOPER: EA SPORTS
PRICE: \$89.95
PLAYERS: 1-4
OUT: MAY
WEBSITE:
WWW.EURO2004GAME.EA.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

EA's FIFA games always sell like hotcakes. Their 2002 World Cup spin-off had similar success and Europe's premier national cup tournament has now received the EA Sports treatment. Euro 2004 plays more like 2002 World Cup than the latest FIFA.

When it comes to summing up how EA Sports' soccer games play, it's hard to find something to say that this magazine hasn't already said 101 times before. *Euro 2004* is generally strong and beautifully presented, but there are still a number of improvements we'd like to see. There, for the 102nd time – we've said it again.

Next, we normally describe what has been improved. When it comes to its yearly updates, EA is known to make one or two token improvements. Usually, it's the new season roster, or how the graphics are slightly sharper, or how they got David Beckham's haircut right. Here though, there's a bigger difference, with more emphasis on elements crucial for teams entering big tournaments like *Euro 2004* to consider.

In top-flight soccer, set plays are a crucial commodity, so it's nice that EA has given them a *Madden NFL*-style makeover. When taking a corner or certain free kicks, you're given a selection of plays to choose from, each one positioning your players and telling them what to do once you kick the ball. This adds more thought to the set pieces, and makes them more exciting. We're not so keen on the "golf-swing" style meter that you use to take direct shots, though.

Your team roster is important to consider. Team morale and injuries have been elements in games before, but they've rarely been noticeable. In *Euro 2004*, each individual player's morale is affected by scoring goals, injury, exclusion from the squad, and other things such as if their personal sponsorship deals get cancelled. You get an update after each match telling you what each player is feeling and why, giving you the chance to edit your team and make it through the tournament with your squad being healthy.

The actual in-game action doesn't represent the sport as closely as we'd like. Sure, you can tinker with your squad, but the reality is that the game is quite 'arcade', and relies too heavily on using the same movements. Too much play occurs up the centre of the park, with the wingers seeing little of the ball out wide. It's fun and fast-moving, but not a realistic simulation.

Despite this, creating scenarios (is there anything better than coming from behind to win, against the odds?) and the massive selection of 71 European national teams adds some welcome spice. All the big guns are included (France, Portugal, England) as well as other less-glamorous teams (Slovakia, San Marino).

And incidentally – EA don't have Becks' hair-do right! Becks has since shaved off his golden locks off again. A psychologist has claimed he's trying to get a "new start" after his sexual liaisons were uncovered in the British tabloids. Ummm, if you say so... **Richie Young**



BRONZE
PlayStation 2
OFFICIAL MAGAZINE-AUSTRALIA

JUST LIKE A WAX DUMMY

There's barely a soul in the world who doesn't know that EA really knows how to make its sports games look authentic. *Euro 2004* is no exception. Even though the game is developed in soccer-un-mad Canada, it's plain to see that the team must follow the European game. Everyone, but particularly the stars, are instantly recognisable. Becks, Luis Figo, Zidane, Thierry Henry, Wayne Rooney and Michael Owen are all in there. And while they're a bit on the stumpy side, they look like they'd fit right in alongside our Kylie at Madam Tussaud's Wax Museum in London.



They like their grass almost as much as their balls

BETTER THAN

THIS IS SOCCER 2004

WORSE THAN

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

The set plays are the best we've seen to date

What they need to fix

The scoring has improved but isn't yet "quite there"

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	08	Not as polished as expected but well animated
Sound	08	It's a foregone conclusion: the presentation is A1
Gamplay	07	It's becoming a cliché: it's solid but not brilliant
Lifespan	06	Great situational scenarios but tiresome play

There are certainly a lot of standout elements here, but the core game is yet to catch up to PES3.





BEAT'EM UP

ONIMUSHA BLADE WARRIORS

Will the latest Onimusha title own your soul or just leave you in limbo?

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: CAPCOM
PRICE: \$79.95
PLAYERS: 1-4
OUT: JUNE
WEBSITE: WWW.CAPCOM.COM
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

For what began as a spin-off to the Resident Evil series, Onimusha has been a highly successful franchise for Capcom. Onimusha Blade Warriors represents a by-product that focuses on combat, while keeping the supernatural setting in feudal Japan.

With the two Onimusha games to date running parallel to each other, it's been hard for gamers to make comparisons between them. Would Samanosuke hold his own against the swordsmanship of Gogodantess? Who is the greatest of the warriors? These questions are now answered by hurling almost their entire casts against one another in combat.

The game plays like a 2D fighter, with the exception that characters can leap to different tiers like rooftops and cliffs. Aside from the simple setup, the mechanics are almost identical to the combat we've seen in Onimusha. The added items include period weapons like shuriken and magic as well as items like machineguns and hammers. Battles are a balance of offence, defence and acquiring the souls from your fallen enemies.

While the detail on the characters and the dazzling effects are impressive, it's the levels that are the real eye candy. Clashes take place in a variety of places, including a dragonboat at sea, inside a bamboo thicket and along a lonely stretch of highway at sunset, skirted by wheat fields. Some stages look cartoony, while others boast amazing detail, like the forest setting with glorious waterfalls that spray animated water.

The single-player Story Mode allows you to fight your way through a brief 10-mission scenario, with each level having slightly different (albeit all combat-based) objectives. Granted, you could throw a tissue over the

almost non-existent plot, but there are some cool cut-scenes linking the missions that fans of the series will eat up. At the completion of each level, you can use the souls you have acquired to bolster your attributes.

Versus mode allows you to play against up to three friends, and if you're short of them, you can make up the numbers with computer opponents. You can battle for souls or to the death. Further to that, Custom Versus mode allows you to select powered-up characters from the Story Mode.

A minor problem is that after completing every level, you have the tedium of loading up the previous data, saving and then preparing the next level. We've already seen a number of games utilising a far more streamlined approach effectively and Blade Warriors would have benefited greatly from following their lead in this particular area. **Nick O'Shea**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	09	Some eye-popping levels and masterful sword-work
Sound	07	A heady soundtrack of native drums
Gameplay	06	Samurai in supernatural swordplay
Lifespan	06	Not quite the depth of a fully-fledged fighter

If you have a multi-tap, or a thirst for demon slaying, or you're waiting for Onimusha 3 – this is well worth it.

06

BETTER THAN
STREET FIGHTER EX 3
WORSE THAN
TEKKEN 4

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time
Getting to play with all your favourite Onimusha characters in the one game
What they need to fix
Tedious save screens break up the single-player game

MORE NINJAS THAN YOU CAN THROW A SMOKE BOMB AT

With a cast of 16 and a further eight to unlock, Blade Warriors boasts an impressive cast. In your quest you can either side with the human forces and be a powerful Onimusha warrior, or take up the blade in the demon armies of Lord Nobunaga. There's pain to be had!



It gets competitive backstage at Wheel of Fortune



PLATFORM

THE CAT IN THE HAT

It may not have Mike Myers, but it's got pussy galore!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR:
VIVENDI UNIVERSAL

DEVELOPER:
MAGENTA SOFTWARE

PRICE: **\$69.95**

PLAYERS: **1**

OUT: **NOW**

WEBSITE: **WWW.VUGAMES.COM**

60HZ MODE: **NO**

WIDESCREEN: **NO**

SURROUND SOUND: **NO**

ONLINE: **NO**

BACK STORY

This is the game based on the movie, which in turn was based on the classic Dr Seuss children's book about a cat in a stripy hat getting up to all manner of colourful wackiness and poetic nonsense. Easy!

Firstly, we would like to send out our commiserations to anyone who had to sit through Mike Myers' latest film. But as with any film that hits the screens these days, a game usually accompanies it. The surprising thing is, this is the first instance we've come across where the game is actually better than the film.

You control The Cat In The Hat – disappointingly not voiced by Mike Myers – who's on (pun intended) a cat-and-mouse hunt with neighbour Mr Quinn, who is not voiced by Alec Baldwin. Because the box that wasn't supposed to be opened has been opened, the Cat now has to capture all the magic that has escaped. During his journey he'll also find movie boards, goo and other items that can be collected to unlock items. As the game is pitched at kids, the levels are simple and anyone over the age of 10 will fly through them without too much heartache.

The main problem with *The Cat In The Hat's* gameplay is that it can't decide if it's a 2D or 3D platformer. The view is from a 2D side-on perspective, but the Cat can move in 360 degrees, resulting in a game that definitely resembles a Dr Seuss book – in that the Cat will go here, the Cat will go there, the Cat will go everywhere. But this can be a bad thing, especially when it comes to facing enemies. While you'll think you have one enemy lined up for a kill, you'll find you're off target and may end up getting pussy-whipped.

The game is also extremely short in length. While there are plenty of items to collect and unlock, there's nothing more to do once you've completed all the tasks. At the most, you might get 10 hours of solid play before you've unlocked everything, played every level and heard every fish joke in the Cat's joke book. A multiplayer mode may have added a little more life to the game. As it stands you're unlikely to play through the single-player adventure more than once.

Anyone who loved the movie will enjoy the game though. It captures all the humour and spirit of the film

and packs it into a simple game that any child can pick up and play. There are plenty of bright colours, things to collect and lots of other features that will appeal to young children. Unfortunately, anyone who doesn't fingerprint during business hours will see it as a clumsy game full of simple challenges and the worst Mike Myers impression ever. But considering it's a lot better than the movie, we can't complain too much. **Paul Frew**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Fairly average but plenty of colour
Sound	04	Never use this Mike Myers Impersonator... ever
Gameplay	05	We've got no idea what's going on here
Lifespan	04	Way too short with nothing to do once completed

Only kids will dig *The Cat In The Hat*. There are a number of superior kids' games already available though.

05

"BOOK HIM!"

Dr. Seuss
Green Eggs
and
Ham



Contrary to some rumours, there really was a Doctor Seuss. He wasn't really a doctor, though. Theodor or "Ted" Seuss was born way back in 1904 in Springfield, Massachusetts and died at the ripe old age of 87 when he passed away on September 24, 1991. Ted was a natural artist but never had formal training. Other legendary Seuss books include, *Green Eggs and Ham*, *Fox in Socks* and *I Am Not Going To Get Up Today!*

BETTER THAN

LOONEY TUNES: BACK IN ACTION

WORSE THAN

WHIPLASH

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

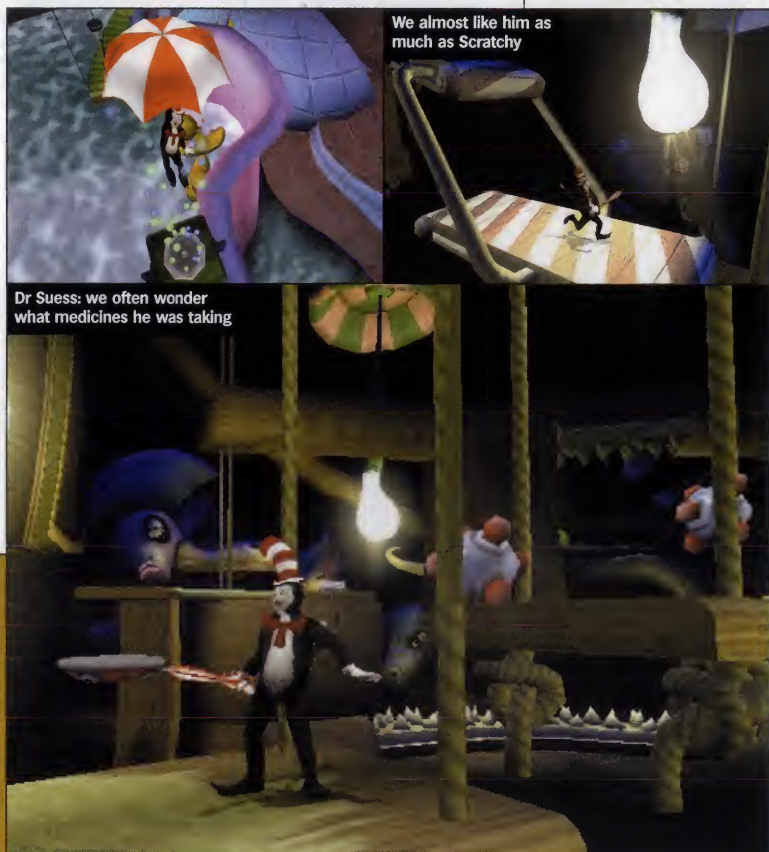
Captured everything from the zany creatures to wonky platforms

What they need to fix

If Mike Myers is the star of the film then get his voice in the game!

CUT THE CAT

One of the items on the list to collect in each level are movie boards. There are usually three per level. Once collected you'll unlock a new item in the gallery. Items include concept art, movie stills and footage from *The Cat In The Hat* movie.



We almost like him as much as Scratchy

Dr Seuss: we often wonder what medicines he was taking



WHERE DID HE COME FROM?

THE SECOND TO LAST THING
THAT'LL GO THROUGH YOUR MIND



PlayStation 2

KILL SWITCH



TO BE THE BEST, YOU'VE GOT TO BEAT THE BEST

UNDERESTIMATE THIS ENEMY AT YOUR PERIL. THEY WILL WORK AS A UNIT TO TAKE YOU DOWN. FORTUNATELY, YOU HAVE TWO NEW COMBAT TECHNIQUES TO DEFEND YOURSELF WITH. THE 'OFFENSIVE COVER SYSTEM' ALLOWS YOU TO SHAPE YOUR BODY TO THE ENVIRONMENT, GIVING YOU VITAL PROTECTION. USING 'BLINDFIRE' YOU CAN LAY DOWN SUPPRESSING FIRE WITHOUT LEAVING YOUR COVER POSITION. UNFORTUNATELY, SO CAN THE ENEMY.

INCLUDES EXCLUSIVE BONUS DISC FEATURING PLAYABLE DEMO OF Socom II: U.S. Navy SEALs AND A PREVIEW TRAILER OF Syphon Filter™: The Omega Strain.

namco

www.killswitch-game.com

fun,
anyone?
PlayStation 2

Nope, that's NOT Astoroth from *Soul Calibur II*



ACTION



Battles are almost as spectacular as New Year's

SEVEN SAMURAI 20XX

It's based on the classic film of the same name... BUT WITH ROBOTS!

DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: ATARI
DEVELOPER: SAMMY STUDIOS
PRICE: \$89.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.SAMMYSTUDIOS.COM/GAMES/SS/
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

BACK STORY

Sammy Studios' output has been a mixed bag. Their games often have a cult following, such as the Gully Gear titles; or are eclectic genre-crossers like Galerians: Ash. Their latest effort is no less odd.

BETTER THAN

THE BOUNCER

WORSE THAN

DYNASTY WARRIORS IV

LAB TEST

What they nailed this time

Frantic combat that looks cool and is easy to perform

What they need to fix

The plot, the pauses between combat and the lack of depth

Seven Samurai 20XX is certainly a weird little game. Not weird in the sense that you control a brick that has the ability to turn things into ice cream, but weird in that it's oddly conceived.

The game is loosely based on the 1954, three-hour epic film, *The Seven Samurai* by deceased Japanese director Akira Kurosawa. The movie's storyline about villagers beset by vicious bandits who are then defended by seven unlikely heroes would seem perfect for a faithful videogame treatment. It's odd then, that this title is set not in feudal Japan but rather some far off futuristic world where evil robots replace human foes. We're not kidding...

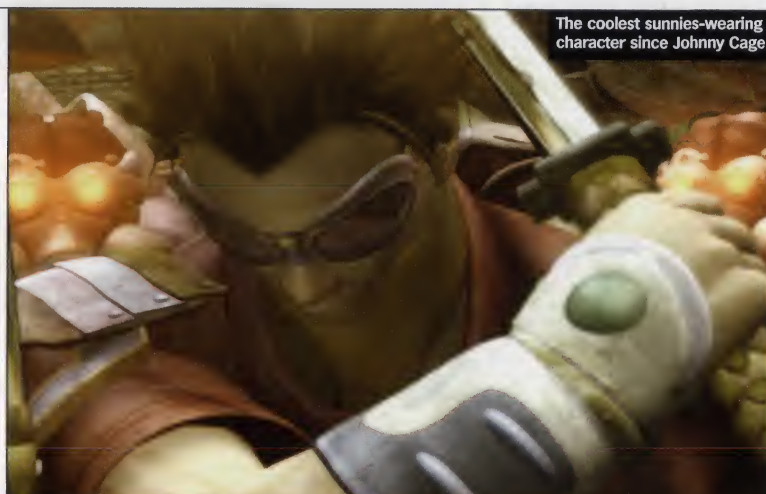
Initially you play the part of Ronin Natoe, a cocky youngster with a dark past, a stony heart and the ability to slice and dice enemies like a human blender. Almost as soon as the game begins, Natoe is beset by hordes of gangly robotic thugs and barely a second after your buttocks have settled into the couch cushions you're thrust head-first into combat against multiple enemies.

This may be a problem with some titles but where 20XX excels is in its simplistic combat system. Other games may force you to perform complex hand gymnastics to pull off big fighting combos, but not this one. Essentially, using the left analogue stick to move, the r button to slash and the q button to dodge will see you through most battles. Things can sometimes get tricky, however, especially when organic beasties and larger robots join in the fray. This is not a problem. A simultaneous touch of o + u and you'll pull a second sword out and start busting some seriously destructive combos for a limited time.

Like the gameplay in *Devil May Cry* and *Shinobi*, the number of sword strikes you manage to string together raises your combo score and the power of your attack. This can lead to some spectacular-looking battles as the enemies arrive in droves, seemingly eager to be spread across the floor in sparking pieces. Plus your second sword recharges very quickly, so there won't be too many moments during play when you'll feel vulnerable to attack.

The graphics are not breathtaking but move quickly and, for the most part, smoothly. The battle scenes in particular have a pleasing rainbow effect. Rarely has the bulk destruction of evil automatons looked so pretty. Sound is workmanlike, with the voice acting stilted and the effects all too predictable. The game itself, frankly, is a little simple.

Sure, during the heat of battle your pulse will race and you'll have a good time, but as soon as the melee is over you're basically left to wander around rather drab



The coolest sunnies-wearing character since Johnny Cage

DEATH CAN BE PRETTY

After tapping **o** + **u** your character will be ready to unleash the full fury of his double sword attack. This attack rips through the enemies like a chainsaw through butter and when things get really clogged up, even slows down time and causes foes to explode in bright, sparkly rainbows. It's advisable to get your licks in quick-smart however, as your double sword attack has a time limit. Watch droplets of perspiration roll off the fighters' bodies, and the in-built extensive facial damage system. Eyes get black and bruised, lips get busted open and other facial wounds weep blood right in front of your eyes.



environments, sit through mediocre – and bewildering – cut-scenes and kill time until the next big dust-up.

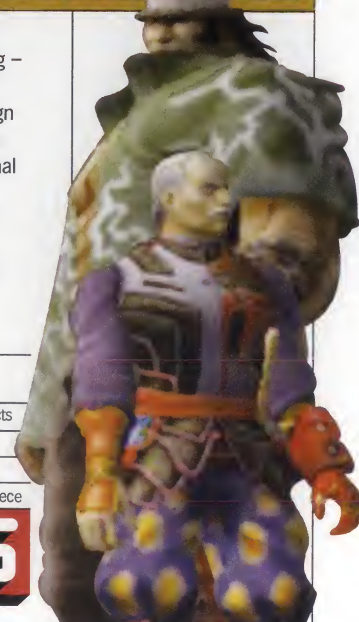
Fans of anime may appreciate the character design and the neo-futuristic, cyberpunk aesthetic, but it is a little unoriginal. Devotees of the Akira Kurosawa original will probably be nonplussed by the whole affair. This leaves the potential fanbase for this game to fall to combat freaks. *Seven Samurai* is an average action effort with some enjoyable battles and a sprinkling of joyous moments. **A** Anthony O'Connor

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	Occasionally drab but with excellent combat effects
Sound	05	Ordinary voice acting with adequate explosions
Gameplay	06	A total button masher but fun in brief spurts
Lifespan	05	Quite easy and not exactly a compelling masterpiece

While fun for a little while, *SS20XX* is an ordinary hack 'n' slasher and a waste of a potentially great license.

06



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ACTION-ADVENTURE

SCOOBY-DOO! MYSTERY MAYHEM

Jeepers! It's, like, haunted

✗ DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: THQ
DEVELOPER: ARTIFICIAL MIND & MOVEMENT
PRICE: \$49.95
PLAYERS: 1
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.A2M.COM
60HZ MODE: NO
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

There's a new Scooby film, and as if by magic, a new Scooby game. Coincidental? Maybe. The fact that *Scooby-Doo! Mystery Mayhem* features the old-school cartoon style Scooby gang rather than the shiny new movie gang would put paid to this theory, if the whole scenario wasn't such a damned cliché. And, like most clichés of this type, the game is pretty much a disappointment.

The game plays out like episodes of the cartoon, from formulaic beginning to formulaic end, complete with splitting up to solve the mysteries. Unfortunately, the only playable characters are Shaggy and Scooby. It does, however, break away from the cartoon's trademark action by having the pair go after real, live, actual ghoules as well as the pathetic Individuals in Sheets.

But everything it does has been done before, and done better. After a short time, Shaggy and Scooby come across the Tome of Doom, a mystical book which

captures spectres by sucking them into the pages. Basically, you open the book, and hammer away at the designated button till you get your ghost.

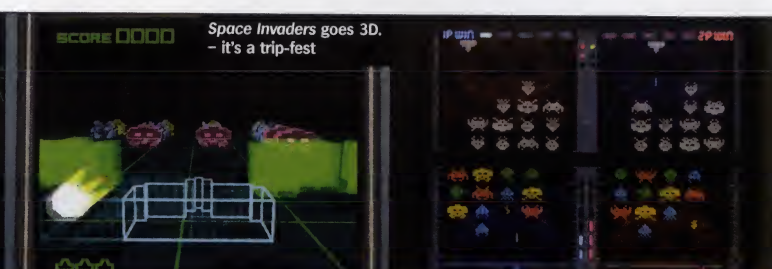
The puzzles are pedestrian, the gameplay a little too easy, and the laugh track seems to occur at really inappropriate moments. If it's nostalgia you want, try the actual cartoon itself. **D Michelle Starr**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	07	The gang remains true, but the levels aren't spooky
Sound	05	The voice acting by the original cast is cool
Gameplay	04	Nobody likes their intelligence insulted
Lifespan	04	Five – count 'em – five levels. Woo

While the game's been aimed at the young uns, it still falls short of anything we'd expect for our beloved console.

04



SHOOTER

SPACE INVADERS ANNIVERSARY

"Increase speed, drop down and reverse direction!"

✗ DETAILS

DISTRIBUTOR: RED ANT
DEVELOPER: TAITO
PRICE: \$49.95
PLAYERS: 1-2
OUT: NOW
WEBSITE: WWW.SPACEINVADERS.JP
60HZ MODE: YES
WIDESCREEN: NO
SURROUND SOUND: NO
ONLINE: NO

To mark the quarter-century birthday of the arcade game that caused a 100-Yen coin shortage in Japan, developer Taito has compiled nine versions into one package.

The main 'menu' is a 3D room filled with arcade cabinets – you simply pick one and the view zooms in close to the screen, where the game is already playing. There's no need to wait for individual games to load, which is nice.

You can choose from the original black-and-white tabletop *Space Invaders*, the original upright cabinet, the one with bits of coloured cellophane stuck on the screen, *Space Invaders Part II*... and more... but, in case you hadn't guessed, they're all pretty much identical. You always move a gun left and right along the bottom of the screen and fire one shot at a time at waves of invaders who move from left to right and back again as they inevitably edge downward.

The new two-player 'versus' game is quite fun (you shoot through a wave of invaders at your opponent), and

the 3D version makes aiming a lot easier for those raised on 3D games.

If you were ever a *Space Invaders* arcade player, get this – accurate versions of the arcade games, some okay new variations, and a couple of funny design sketches to look at. Plus it's cheap. But nine near-identical versions of the same – classic, but very basic – game is really no fun for anyone else. **D Ed Lomas**

OFFICIAL VERDICT

Graphics	02	Accurately rubbish
Sound	01	Accurately rubbish
Gameplay	04	Accurately simple
Lifespan	02	Too repetitive for today's gamers

Sure, we all love and respect *Space Invaders*, but it's really hard to enjoy playing it these days.

03

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Starship Troopers 2: Hero of the Federation

Director: Phil Tippett **Starring:** Richard Burgi, Colleen Porch, Bill Brown, Ed Quinn, Drew Powell
Distributor: Columbia **Rating:** MA15+ **Out:** Now **Price:** \$39.95



FILM: When it was decided a *Starship Troopers* sequel would be feasible, it was also agreed that a direct-to-video release would be best. After all, original director Paul Verhoeven wasn't interested, and there wouldn't be any stars cast.

Starship Troopers 2 is quick to get to the guts of the action. A bunch of troopers are being baled up by bugs, so they flee to a nearby outpost for safety. Naturally, their pick-up's going to be late and not everyone's going to make it out alive.

This is not the first film. It looks cheaper and doesn't have the same

epic feel to it. It is, however, entertaining, not to mention a fairly respectable follow-up. It's definitely the same world, and it's evident that some of the same folks are involved – you can see this in the backdrop, visuals and pacing. Phil Tippett, whose company created the effects for the first film, sits in the director's chair and for the most part, he succeeds in his delivery. **6/10**

EXTRAS: Great commentaries, good making-of documentary, visual effects feature, photographs and trailers. **7/10**

VERDICT: It's not as good a movie or extras package as the first film, but it's still satisfying. **CM**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Top commentary quote

Amusingly, one of the first things you hear on the commentary is producer Jon Davison saying "It's kind of like beating a dead horse isn't it?". Seeing that the Columbia Tri-Star Horse is on the screen at the time, he could've been referring to that, but we've a feeling he was sarcastically chiming in about being responsible for another *Troopers* film getting off the ground. Whatever the case, a good ice-breaker for not only his co-chatters but the audience. Cheeky yes, and it will be interesting to see if his bosses take exception to his little swipe.



Underworld

Director: Len Wiseman **Starring:** Kate Beckinsale, Scott Speedman, Michael Sheen, Shane Brolly, Bill Nighy
Distributor: Columbia **Rating:** MA15+ **Out:** May **Price:** \$29.95



FILM: It was enough to whet any horror aficionado's appetite. Vampires and werewolves together in the same movie. Better still, vampires and werewolves at war. That's the central premise of *Underworld*. Selene (Kate Beckinsale) is one of the vampires, a warrior who strives to systematically wipe out the werewolves or "lycans". The vampires see the lycans as inferior underclass. As a gothic action-mystery, *Underworld* is exceptional. Its numerous fight scenes are neatly choreographed and the special effects are by and large very impressive (although the lycans are more convincing in some scenes than others). The performances, too,

are generally strong (compare Nighy here to his turn in *Love, Actually*). The complex plot has plenty of twists and there are some fun gizmos employed in the vampire-lycan war. Also, it has the sort of narrative that can be legitimately labelled "breathless" – it doesn't let up for a heartbeat. Ultimately, though, it's like chewing bubblegum – sweet and satisfying at the time, but liable to leave you hungry and empty afterwards. **7/10**

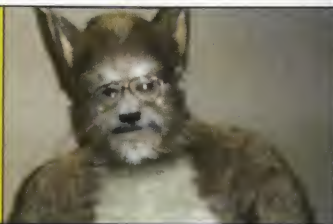
EXTRAS: One commentary with director and writers, one with technical bods, five featurettes, a making-of documentary, music video, storyboards and trailers. **6/10**

VERDICT: An excellent action movie – only those expecting high art could be disappointed. **KA**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Wherewhats?

"Lycan" is short for lycanthrope, the name given to a person who can supposedly take the form of an animal. Stories of people turning into beasts go back thousands of years. In ancient Greece, there was a cult of the Wolf-Zeus, which held an annual feast which mixed meat with bits of sacrificed humans. Legend has it that anyone who ate it became a wolf, and couldn't become human again unless they avoided eating humans for nine years.



"Mum's coming. Don't let her see your hicky!"

School of Rock

Director: Richard Linklater **Starring:** Jack Black, Joan Cusack, Mike White, Sarah Silverman
Distributor: Paramount **Rating:** PG **Out:** June **Price:** \$29.95



FILM: Dewey Finn (Jack Black) is a musician down on his luck. Not only has he been kicked out of his band just weeks before the

Battle of the Bands, but his flatmate's evil girlfriend is pestering him to pay rent – and he's flat broke.

Intercepting a phone call intended for his flatmate, Dewey decides to impersonate him and fill in at the state's most prestigious elementary school, where he finds pupils he can train up to be his backing group.

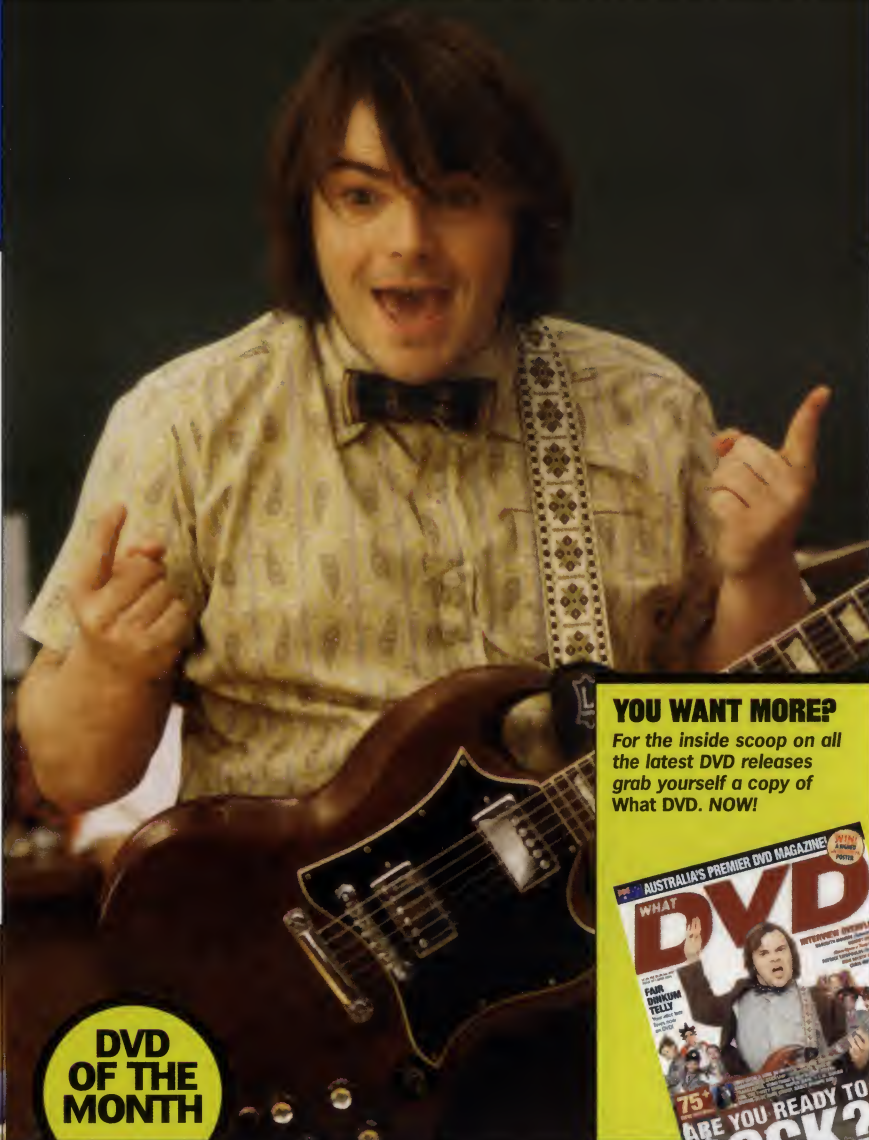
Hardly the most original movie, but what makes *School of Rock* so refreshing is its cast of characters. With *School of Rock* written specifically for him by Mike White,

Jack Black does a phenomenal job and the kids can act and are genuinely great musicians.

School of Rock is light-hearted fun that never takes itself seriously, has a great cast, a killer soundtrack and might even teach you a thing or two about life. Well, maybe not, but at least you'll know the difference between Led Zep and AC/DC. **8/10**

EXTRAS: One commentary with Jack Black and the director, and one with the school kids, a fun making-of documentary, 'Diary Of... Jack Black', and video of the kids up to their antics at the premiere. **9/10**

VERDICT: A great movie with an excellent set of special features – it's a rare one that can be enjoyed by kids and adults alike. **A- AM**



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DVD OF THE MONTH

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Jack Black's pitch to Led Zeppelin

Led Zeppelin have always been reluctant to licence their music for commercial purposes, so the *School of Rock* producers came up with a novel approach to try and persuade them otherwise: they begged. Included on the DVD is the pitch made by Jack Black, filmed in front of more than 2,000 screaming extras, pleading for permission to use 'Immigrant Song' in the movie. It worked.



Sydney's *My Restaurant Rules* entry ended in spectacular fashion

Once Upon a Time in Mexico

Director: Robert Rodriguez **Starring:** Antonio Banderas, Salma Hayek, Willem Dafoe, Johnny Depp, Mickey Rourke, Eva Mendes, Ruben Blades **Distributor:** Columbia **Rating:** MA15+ **Out:** June **Price:** \$34.95



FILM: *El Mariachi*, and its sequel, *Desperado*, have garnered cult followings. Director Rodriguez now has the freedom to create the third film in his trilogy, and here we see his lust for both frivolity and violence sated in the same film.

Banderas returns as El Mariachi, the wandering guitarist and gunslinger. Hired to destroy his country, he instead decides to save it. He ropes in his buddies; men who, like him, like to build impractical weapon systems into guitar cases. Add some other assorted anti-heroes, lots of acoustic guitar music, strange pagan rituals, señoritas, and

lots of gore, and you have *Once Upon A Time In Mexico*.

There are plenty of innovative action sequences, the special effects look believable and a strong sense of humour runs throughout. Yet the movie doesn't really hold together.

There are too many characters, and the excesses of violence desensitise the viewer towards the end. Rodriguez admits the movie was experimental and home cinema fans with the same attitude will enjoy it. **6/10**

EXTRAS: Two commentaries, a directing lesson from Rodriguez, eight deleted scenes, DVD-ROM features, special FX docs. **10/10**

VERDICT: An excursion into extreme violence – almost a comedy. **A- CM**

EXTRA! EXTRA!

Ten Minute Cooking School

In this bonus feature we see the energetic Robert Rodriguez display his cooking finesse, minus the smarmy crap associated with TV chefs. The dish is Puerto Pibil, the slow-roasted pork dish that Johnny Depp's character obsesses over. Not only do we get a punchy and dynamic cooking lesson, we also learn more about Rodriguez's life philosophy – "Not knowing how to cook is like not knowing how to f**k." He must have a healthy domestic life!



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James Ellis

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Tips Editor

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78.....SOCOM II.....	TACTICS
86.....FINAL FANTASY X-2.....	TACTICS
92.....MX UNLEASHED.....	TIPS
92.....SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN.....	TIPS
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SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS

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ONLINE TACTICS

STICK TOGETHER

Just like the single-player game, it's best to move around the maps in groups. This way you have more focused firepower and are less susceptible to being ambushed.

GO WIDE

Sticking to the perimeter of each map gives you an advantage because there are fewer angles that you can be attacked from. However, it's worth noting that this is a popular tactic, so you're likely to encounter more resistance while doing this.

KEEP IT FRESH

When playing consecutive games, vary your tactics to avoid becoming predictable. If the enemy knows where you're going to be coming from you might as well save them the trouble and shoot yourself.

THE MORE GUNS THE BETTER

As a team, utilise a variety of weaponry. A team full of snipers will get owned in a close-quarters battle and having too many machinegunners means you'll be vulnerable to ranged attacks. Diversify and you'll add a great deal of versatility to the squad.

KNOW THE GAME

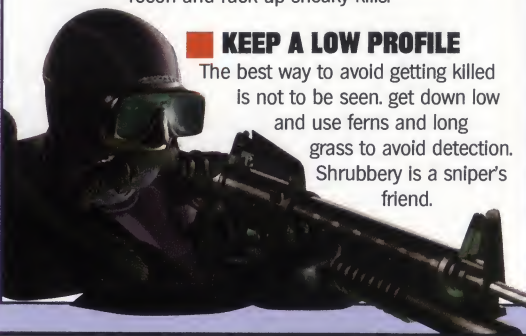
When playing objective-based games like Demolition and Hostage, your primary concern should be eliminating the opposing force. Although achieving the objective will win the round, getting the job done is a lot easier without eight heavily armed psychos shooting at you.

LEAN ON ME

Pressing Left and Right on the d-pad will make your character lean. Leaning allows you to peek around corners without presenting a large target. Practise running up to corners and peeking around them. It's a great way to do recon and rack up sneaky kills.

KEEP A LOW PROFILE

The best way to avoid getting killed is not to be seen. Get down low and use ferns and long grass to avoid detection. Shrubbery is a sniper's friend.



MISSION 1: SEEDING CHAOS RUGOVA'S NAME OVERHEARD

Before you kill anyone, advance 50 metres to the "W" on your map and lie in the bushes by the road. Tell your men to hold fire and wait here. Two terrorists will come up and have a conversation. You will hear the name of the syndicate's leader, allowing you to go into the next mission better prepared for your enemy.

RENDEZVOUS WITH MALLARD

If you don't want to get your hands dirty you can order your team mates to clear the area and kill the two terrorists on the road. Watch out for another enemy on the far hill about 150 metres down the road. After killing him (zoom in with your M4A1 and hit him with a headshot) follow the crumbling wall to your right until you encounter two more terrorists. Go inside the building here to talk to Mallard.

INFILTRATE VILLAGE

Take advantage of the good hiding spots Mallard points out (in front of the church) to take out the terrorist in the ruins, the two on the road near the bridge and the one on the road further back towards where you began. Make sure you collect the SR-25 rifle in the ruins hiding spot because it has superior range. Do not cross the bridge in front of you or you will be seen by a sniper and the alarm will be raised. Walk under the bridge and make your way down the river until you see a bunker to your left. Head up to the bunker and go inside the tunnel behind it. Follow the tunnel until you get to another bunker with a sniper rifle in it. Collect this and use it to take out the two snipers up on top of the building (200 metres to your right). Once the enemies are dead, make your way up to the top of the building to get a good view of your surroundings.

The reality show *Queer Colours for a Straight Guy* didn't really take off



PLACE SATCHELS

There is one enemy to watch out for inside the building, then you should use the Southeast-facing window to snipe as many enemies below as you can. Make sure you snipe the enemy standing in the doorway of the gas station. Place a satchel charge where this enemy was standing, then carry his body around to the back of the building. From here, you can snipe the terrorist in the window 100 metres ahead. Head over to the building that you just sniped the guy in, but be careful as there are two more enemies inside. Order one of your team mates to deploy a satchel on the ammo boxes

inside. If you have moved through the village stealthily enough, you will be able to capture one of the terrorists and lead him to the extraction point. If not, simply move your team to the extraction point to complete the mission.

MISSION 2: TERMINAL TRANSACTION LOCATE/SECURE GUARD POST

Move forward along the line of bushes until you come to some crates. From here, crawl across to the bushes on your right. From here, you can see a guard standing on patrol. Shoot him and then shoot the guard on the second floor of the guard post. Wait a few seconds and a second guard should turn up. Shoot him and you will have completed both guard post objectives. Hide the bodies and continue.

INFILTRATE COMPLEX

Heading South from the guard post you will encounter one enemy in a fenced-off section. There is also another on patrol about 50 metres West of this position. Head North from here and you will find another enemy near the truck. Crawl inside the tunnel just West of the truck.

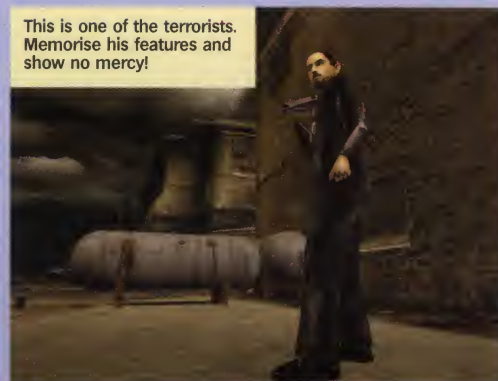
SECURE COMPLEX

As you exit the tunnel be ready for the two enemies above you on the roof. Head North around the perimeter of the building. You will encounter one enemy around each of the next two corners. You should then head up the stairs and snipe another two enemies down below, being careful to have Bravo team cover your back in case someone comes out of the door here. Go back down the stairs and shoot the enemy around the corner before returning to the top of the stairs.

DIGITAL CAMERA

Equip your night vision goggles (Up on the d-pad) and make your way through the

This is one of the terrorists. Memorise his features and show no mercy!



THE HIGH ROAD

Search out effective sniper positions

When moving into a new area it's important to look around and see if there is anywhere you can place one of your team to give you covering fire as you progress. Leaving one of your team looking out over the area ahead will drastically increase team safety.

The market is now safe to explore



building. Note that your eyes will also adjust to the darkness inside the building and allow you to see okay without the goggles if you stand still for about 30 seconds. Head through the room, staying up on the walkways. Do not drop down to the floor or you will take damage. There will be four enemies on the walkway up here to take out before you can collect the digital camera from the small room in the corner. Be careful because an enemy may come in from the balcony.

TERRORIST TRAINING VIDEO

Head back out of the building the way you came and re-enter the building from the ground-level door around the corner. You will have two enemies in the first room to deal with. Climb up onto the ramp. Once you're at the top of the ramp you should be able to snipe an enemy on the ground either side of you. Make your way into the next section of the building. Prepare for the two enemies in the room to the right, and then collect the video from the next room.

CONTACT LIST

Head down the stairs into the next section but watch out for the enemies lying down in wait from you. You can shoot them from the stairs. Once the area is clear, you can collect the contact list from the first room to your left, after the stairs.

EXTRACTION

Take your team over to the extraction point and place a C4 charge on the gate to blow it up and complete the mission.

MISSION 3: UPLAND ASSAULT NEUTRALISE AIDE-DE-CAMP

It's a good idea to change your primary weapon to a silenced sniper rifle and change your grenade to a thermal sniper scope. This way you can rely on your team mates to handle any nearby enemies while you concentrate on long-distance kills. You will need to order your team mates to "Fire at will"

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This would be a good time to equip the night vision goggles



Shoot at terrorists in planes – it makes a nice change of pace

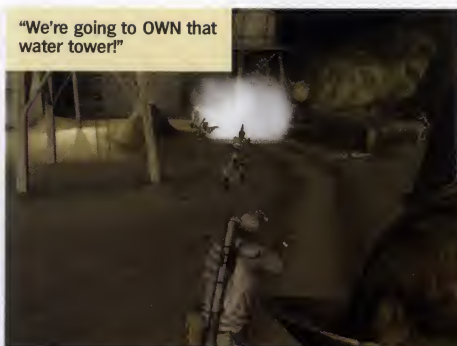


SMOKIN'

Master the smoke grenades

Along with your frag and flashbang grenades, it's important to pack an ample supply of smoke grenades. Deploying smoke grenades obscures the enemy's vision and allows your team to advance safely to new cover.

"We're going to OWN that water tower!"



for this strategy. There will be a couple of enemies that you can snipe from the starting point. Move slowly up the path until you get to the first corner. Dig In here as the enemies will come thick and fast. Switch to your secondary pistol when the enemies get close. Kill all of the enemies in this group to complete this objective.

NEUTRALISE CASTRIOTI SESSERI

Once you are in the castle grounds, head uphill to the right, taking out the handful of men behind the castle. From here you should head North to the servants' quarters. These buildings will be protected by a couple of guards (one in each building) but you will find a laptop in the first building. After securing the buildings equip the sniper rifle and shoot the three men downhill to the West. Now that the perimeter of the building is secured you can head inside to mop up the leaders. Go in the back door of the castle. Have one

of your team mates open the door because there's an enemy right behind it. Swap your sniper rifle for the dead terrorist's machinegun. Do not go down the stairs. Go through the door to the Southwest and kill the enemy inside. Once you go into the next room you will cue a cut-scene with the terrorist leaders.

Once they have finished talking

you must rush up the stairs and past the fireplace as quickly as you can. In the room to the left is Castrioti. Kill him, grab the list on the crate and then head out of the castle through the other door.

NEUTRALISE PLATZ

Once outside you will need to chase Platz around the outside of the castle. Vault over any low walls and follow him as he makes his way to the servants' quarters (where the laptop was). Give him a bullet too. You now have the option of heading back into the castle to collect more pieces of Intel (this will complete a bonus mission) or going straight for extraction. If you decide to go for the Intel there is a codebook and a map on the lower level of the castle but they are protected by about 15 terrorists, so only attempt it if you are feeling confident.

MISSION 4: URBAN SWEEP CLEAR INSERTION AREA

There are only five soldiers to take out so this part of the mission is quite easy. Head inside, then down the stairs. There will be one soldier around the corner to the South. Wait until his back is turned, then eliminate him with extreme prejudice. Creep around the corner and take out the next soldier – the third soldier is still hanging out at the butcher shop. Continue North, keeping an eye out for the soldier next to the truck (he'll be having a conversation with a local kid). The last soldier is up the hill at the North side of town.

RENDEZVOUS WITH INFORMANT

Open the gate nearby and head up the stairs to cue the cut-scene, where you will find out that he has been captured. Head back down the stairs and shoot the first soldier who comes out of the building. Head inside and stay sharp for the two remaining soldiers inside. Once the building is clear you will have to follow the informant to a safer place. Once he gets around the corner and is heading South, watch out for a sniper in the window ahead. Kill the sniper and head into the garden (off to the East) to talk to the informant.

LOCATE LEADER

Head through the tunnel just South of the garden and continue South, using the boxes as cover to take out the soldiers along the way. Lying down and moving prone through the boxes is the best. Halfway down the path you should snipe a soldier above in a window before climbing into the building. Eliminate the three soldiers in the top room and head West through the small park. There will be one soldier as you leave the park. Use the bushes around the corner as cover to shoot the two soldiers up the street to the North, being careful to shoot the sniper on the balcony before he can see you. At the Northern end of the street, take the small alley to the West. Crawl around the corner and snipe the soldier on the balcony. Be ready for one last soldier to the right before you can enter the building and eavesdrop on the meeting.

FIND THE HIDEOUT

Go upstairs and continue into the next building. Make your way South into the slums. Make your way across the low bridge into the hideout, being careful to avoid the soldier with the gun turret in the window. Head upstairs, killing any soldiers you meet until the last room on the right. Do not kill the commander in here. Use a flashbang and subdue her.

EXTRACTION

The good news is that the path to the extraction is marked on your map. The bad news is that there are about 15 soldiers between you and it. Make your way back out of the hideout, watching out for the soldiers coming up the stairs. Head back to the gun turret near the bridge and use it to take out the next few soldiers. Head up the path and use your night vision goggles to spot the enemy before they see you. Take out a few soldiers around the next corner and you can proceed to the courtyard. There will be two enemies in the courtyard to eliminate before it's safe to extract.

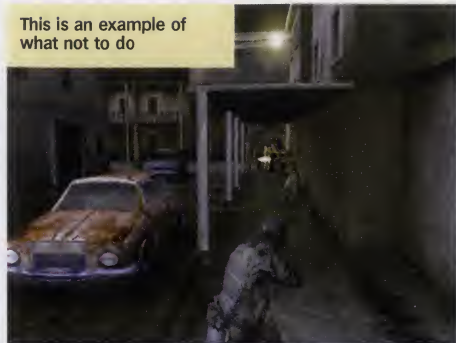
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DUCK AND COVER

Don't leave your team exposed

Before you advance up any street it's important to suss out potential cover that can be used to keep your team safe. In the image below the soldier should be advancing up behind the car to reduce the chance that he can be fired upon.

This is an example of what not to do



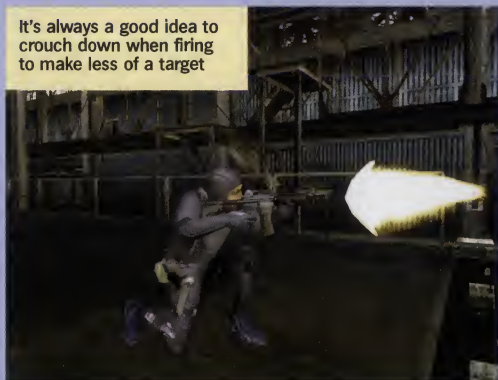
MISSION 5: STRANGLEHOLD INTERCEPT RADIO FREQUENCY

Make your way South, shooting the four soldiers near the hut and on the bridge. The best tactic is to tell your team to hold fire and hold position because if any of the soldiers near the hut see them they will call for helicopter support – and you definitely don't want that. Move along the swamp until you can see the guy standing in front of the hut at a gun turret. After killing him wait there until another soldier walks past. Kill him, then move to the other side of the swamp and circle around the hut from a distance so you can come in from behind and shoot the remaining two soldiers before they can raise the alarm. Go inside and grab the frequency from the radio.

LOCATE LAB

Make your way Southeast, sniping the guy in the hut on the hill and taking down the three-man squad on the eastern shore. As you're progressing East towards the airfield the drug lab will be on your right next to a small hut (with a water tank

It's always a good idea to crouch down when firing to make less of a target



Take advantage of the map (top right) to make a beeline for the next objective



These terrorists don't seem to be roughing it too much



on top of it). Climb up on top of the hill and you will find the entrance down into the lab. You will need to approach the lab carefully though, because there are two huts along the way with three soldiers each near them.

DEMO THE LAB

Go down the ladder and flip the light switch. Equip your pistol and go into first-person mode to equip night vision. Move through the lab playing murder in the dark. Order your team to lay a satchel charge next to the explosive barrels. Collect the rocket launcher in the corner, to the right of the barrels. You will need to have left your ammo and grenade slots free to be able to pick it up. Pull your team out, move 50 metres away and the charge will detonate.

DESTROY PLANE

Continue East toward the plane. After another hut you will move rapidly downhill. A cut-scene will flash up showing a helicopter taking off. Take the narrow canyon path to the right here. Approach the first corner to the left with caution because there are three soldiers here. Kill them quickly then hit the dirt to avoid being seen by the chopper. Crawl forward until you can shoot a few more soldiers in front of the plane. Run toward the plane, taking anyone out in your way, then equip the rocket launcher and shoot the plane. You must be quick to prevent it taking off.

CALL CHOPPER AND EXTRACT

Head North up the airstrip until you can take a path off to the right. You will again be in a narrow canyon. Proceed until you are a few metres beyond the high bridge overhead (marked on your map with a star). Order Bravo to deploy red smoke here to call the chopper to pick you up.

MISSION 6: HYDROELECTRIC INSERTION

Crawl along the cliff to your right, using the bushes for cover. When you get near the guard post wait for the soldier on patrol to walk away, then head through the gate to the dam. Head North along the dam wall, sticking behind the massive pipes for cover. Wait behind the second pipe until you overhear a conversation and control tells you to proceed. Walk along the dam until you get to the fence at the end. Shoot the security camera next to the brightly coloured hut (through the fence). Walk West a few metres and enter through the door – being careful to shoot the camera in the first big room. Head around the corner and you will have made a safe insertion.

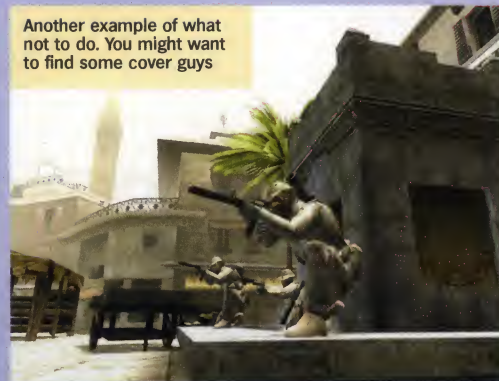
INFILTRATE DAM

Move through the building, eliminating the three soldiers in the second room after the stairs. After this you will leave the building and come to the hut where you shot the security camera. Enter this hut to infiltrate the dam.

SECURE DAM/BOMBS/TRIGGER MAN/TERRORIST LEADER

Head down into the dam. You will come out on the second level and encounter some resistance. Head South along the walkway until you come to a little room with a couple of workers that you can handcuff. Move around the large area killing any soldiers and making your way down to the lower level. You will find a technician in one of the rooms at the

Another example of what not to do. You might want to find some cover guys



Northern end of the room, and the first bomb at the Southern end. Another bomb can be found in one of the rooms off on the North-Eastern side of the main room. Take the corridor off to the South-Eastern side and it will lead you down to another large dam area (after passing through a control room with a couple of soldiers in it).

In this next area you want to move cautiously North. There is one soldier behind some controls about 10 metres in, but the main threat is the trigger man and two soldiers around the first large concrete partition in the area. The trigger man is the one who will yell "What the?" and run for the door to the West. Take him down quickly.

Continue North and prepare for battle around the second concrete partition in the room, because a soldier and the terrorist leader are behind it. Killing them will constitute securing the dam.

The final bomb is in a small room on the North-Eastern side of the main room.

MISSION 7: GUARDIAN ANGELS LOCATE AID WORKERS

Snipe a couple of soldiers in the building ahead then circle around until you get to a small wharf. There is another soldier to snipe here before you move into the city. Move into the building when you see the cut scene with the soldiers talking. Kill them and rush along the path marked on the map to get to the aid worker.

ESCORT AID WORKER TO SAFETY

Take a look on the map for the location of the extraction point and start making your way toward it. To begin with you will have to take a narrow path. Be cautious when it opens into a courtyard because there is a sniper in one of the windows on the Northern side. If you head inside the building before the courtyard you can shoot him and the two men on the ground to the left. There are another three soldiers in the next

SMART COMPUTERS

AI – not just a crap Spielberg movie

It looks like those terrorist training camps have been paying off because the enemies in SOCOM II are smarter, sneakier and more accurate. Don't make the mistake of underestimating the enemy or you'll be looking at the business end of a 'Game Over' screen.

It's never good to hear "man down"



NICE AND SLOW

You can't rush a war

Crawling along slowly might be boring as hell, but they do say "war is hell". And if you want to finish the game without seeing the inside of a body bag then you'll need to spend the majority of the time crouched. The only time the fully standing position should be used is in extreme emergencies or after every enemy in the area has been killed. Being crouched increases your weapon's accuracy and it makes you a less visible, and harder to hit, target. The completely prone position (lying down) is only needed when you're sniping or moving dangerously close to enemies.

What happened to the 'Crouching Tiger' guys?



courtyard but you can shoot them all before they see you if you edge out slowly.

When command warns you of the snipers in the building ahead. Edge slowly out into the street, sniping the nearby soldier. Slowly make your way along till you're about 30 metres away from the building and aim the designator at the top floor (holding the trigger) until the white bar fills up. You can keep trying it until the white bar comes up to designate it from as far away as possible. Now that the building is destroyed you will only have to worry about three guys around the next corner to the left before completing the mission.

MISSION 8: PROTECT AND SERVE RESCUE CHA PERSONNEL/NEUTRALISE ENEMY ARMOUR

Take the path to the right. You will come out behind two soldiers chatting. Pump them with a lot of bullets so that you drop them before they can get a shot off. You can now sneak around the courtyard and eliminate the rest of the pesky soldiers silently.

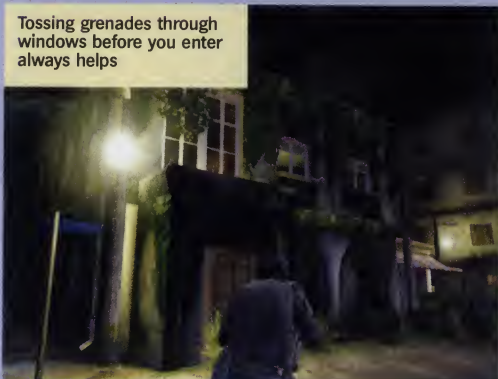
Have your men cover multiple angles like this to avoid ambushes



Don't just sit there. Drag the body into the bushes and get back to work!



Tossing grenades through windows before you enter always helps



Take the path to the right at the end of the courtyard. You will come out next to a fence. Wait for the tank to pass, then rush out onto the street and fire a rocket into the back of the tank before it can blow up the building. Move your team slowly around this area, clearing out all of the soldiers and snipers before you go into the church and rescue the CHA worker.

Once he is rescued you can take the path next to the church into the next area. There will be another CHA worker in the middle of a large roundabout. Do not worry about him because he is in no danger. Stay with your team on the balcony of the first building until all enemies have been killed. Now you can move around to the anti-aircraft gun (the big tank-like weapon) and command your team mate to drop a satchel charge on it. This will bring in air support to mop up the rest of the soldiers. You can now move in and tell the CHA worker to pull out. Do not follow him though or you will fail the mission. Stay by the roundabout until the mission ends.

MISSION 9: AGAINST THE TIDE GET TO EMBASSY

Stick to the tall grass wherever possible to avoid being seen



Equip night vision for this entire mission. Take a look at the embassy on your map. There is a small entrance at the back right via the car park. Make your way through the streets towards it, making sure to command your team mates to "Fire at Will". Back off whenever you encounter opposition and let them handle it. Take out the two men in the parking lot to secure it and complete the first objective.

SECURE PERSONNEL

Breach the door with C4 then head left, up the stairs. You will come out on the second level. There are two embassy workers on either side of this level. Handcuff them and tell them to follow you. Keep heading up the stairs until you can see the door out onto the roof. Tell Bravo team to hold position at the top of the stairs. Head outside to the left and tell the two embassy workers to hold position behind the concrete block (to protect them from the later snipers).

Stick close the top of the stairs so that you can give Bravo support and wait here until command tells you there are snipers. Shoot the sniper on the roof to the left quickly, then continue to hold position.

EXTRACTION

Once you are told the helicopter is 20 seconds away you should move your team to the Zulu position for extraction. Deploy red smoke when you are told to.

MISSION 10: LOCKDOWN LOCATE LAB

Move your team forward up the hill toward the truck and take out the three soldiers nearby. Head to Delta on the map and scan the camp from here. Once you snipe all enemies the recon will be complete. Take your team North and enter the camp through a hole in the fence. At the Northern side of the base, the building in the middle has a bonus objective inside. Find the office with the safe and blow it open with C4, then extract the documents.

BACKING DOWN

Retreating can save your life

It may not be fun, it may not be brave, and it may not be something we 'gamers' like to talk about, but if you don't learn to retreat when you face superior forces then you'll be learning to take a bullet. Fall back, look for an easier path and complete the mission.

Resist the temptation to rush in... or die!



If a direct approach won't work, circle around and attack from behind



Shooting tanks in the back (where the armour is weaker) is the way to go



Look for the pale building in the centre of the base. The lab is hidden beneath it. Move down inside and shoot everyone you encounter. You have to wait a bit before you can blow the base up, so you can scout around for four pieces of intel to complete another bonus objective. Or, if you're feeling lazy, you can just wait for permission to blow it.

DESTROY LAB

As soon as you receive permission you should place a satchel charge next to the barrels in the lab and leg it out of there as quickly as possible. It's now time to mop up the rest of the enemies. Until absolutely everyone in the camp has been killed you will not be allowed to extract.

MISSION 11: GUIDED TOUR

AREA ONE

In this mission you need to escort the scientist to three locations – two silos and a garage. If any enemies spot you an attack chopper will come out. Tell your men to fire at will and they will be able to destroy it without too much trouble. At all times you should keep the scientist behind you when you are clearing an area of enemies to avoid him being shot. The first area on the map is a silo, marked Charlie (C). Shoot the security camera before you go inside. Once you get down to the bottom of the silo, tell the scientist to pick up the clipboard.

AREA TWO

Make your way to Delta (D) on the map, again shooting the security camera before entering the silo. You will encounter even more resistance in the second silo. Once you reach the bottom you should tell the scientist to collect the clipboard.

AREA THREE

Move cautiously to the Echo (E) point (the garage) because there are a number of enemies on the road. There is a final security camera to destroy before you enter. Try to snipe as many enemies from a distance before you engage them up close. Inside you will find the final clipboard in the small office. With all three clipboards collected you can take the team to the extraction point (on a frozen lake to the North).

MISSION 12: DOOMSDAY DELIVERY

FIND BRIDGE/BOMBS

Before you head inside the ship you should snipe nearby soldiers and place C4 on the helicopter to destroy it. There are three real bombs down in the cargo hold and three fake bombs. One set of fake and real is in each room of the cargo hold. Disarm them all to make sure that you have disarmed the real three.

Just to make things difficult there is a fourth bomb toward the back of the boat in the crew quarters. Be careful when you approach this one though, because you will encounter heavy resistance. Continue heading up the stairs after disarming the bomb.

When you get to the bridge you will have to kill everyone and turn the ship's wheel to put it on a safe course. You can now continue on to the top deck to capture Lukanov if you want, but this is not essential.

CALL SUBMARINE

Go to the front of the boat and climb up the crow's nest (near the helipad). Releasing some red smoke here will signal the submarine and complete this mission. That's game, set and match for SOCOM II. It's time to head online!

SIGN UP FOR SOCOM II

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COPIES OF
SOCOM II



Because we just can't stand the thought of anyone out there not being able to join in on the fun of *SOCOM II: US Navy SEALs*, we begged and pleaded with the folks at Sony until they handed us 10 copies of the game to give away. *SOCOM II* scored an impressive 8/10 in Issue #25 and it's become THE network game to play on PS2.

To give yourself a shot at winning a copy of *SOCOM II*, answer the following simple question: "What does SEAL stand for?" Just follow the comp entry details at the bottom of the page, marking your entries "SOCOM II".



HOW TO ENTER – Send entries to OPS2@denverthoward.com.au with the name of the competition. In the subject line or alternatively, send envelopes via snail mail to: Official PlayStation Magazine, PO Box 1037, Bondi Junction, NSW 1355. Email entrants are entitled to one email per competition only. Competitions are open to residents of New Zealand. Entries should be clearly marked and include: The name of the comp, your name, age, phone number and address. All competitions close 16 June, 2004. Note: Images of prizes as shown above may vary from the appearance of the actual prizes received due to circumstances beyond the publisher's control.

PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION WINNERS: R Blee VIC, B Lowne VIC, B Polley NT, G Everton SA, J Wilson VIC, M Crass NSW, K Pilson QLD, N Howe TAS

TAKE THE BATTLE ONLINE

What you'll need to play SOCOM II and other games online



PLAYSTATION 2 CONSOLE: Obviously you'll need the black beast if you want to enter the world of Network Gaming. If you haven't got one of these yet then you should give yourself a sharp slap to the side of the head and run to the nearest games shop now!



MEMORY CARD (8MB): If you want to upload your car from *Need For Speed: Underground* or just see the latest *Driv3r* trailer, you'll need a Memory Card to store things like this. We've heard they're also pretty handy for saving regular PS2 games too...



NETWORK ADAPTER: Bundled with *Hardware Online Arena*, the Network Adapter is your key to network gaming. The adapter comes with a Network Access Disc that contains an introductory video explaining how to set up your adapter and your broadband connection.



HAVE FUN: Once you've plugged it all together there's nothing left to do but turn it on and spend a few minutes signing up your profile, then it's time to grab the controller and get ready to start making new friends – or enemies, depending on how you want to play!



A NETWORK GAME: You'll need something to play if you want to experience network gaming. There's plenty of great network gaming titles already out there and plenty more on the way. You might even have some already in your collection (look for the blue logo on the box).



BROADBAND CONNECTION: You will need an account with an Internet service provider (ISP) in order to get online. BigPond's broadband kit comes with the industry-best broadband modem, two ADSL filter splitters, a phone socket converter and an Installation CD.

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BIGPOND BROADBAND CABLE

If you're living in a major city then there's a good chance you'll be able to sign up for the premium Broadband service – BigPond Broadband Cable at \$59.95 per month. With this package you get unlimited downloads so you'll be able to download as much as you want at super speeds. Download speed will be slowed to 64kbps after you've downloaded 10GB, but that'd have to be some very serious web surfing. You'll also be able to play online with Network Gaming for as long as you like.

BIGPOND BROADBAND ADSL

If you're not able to get cable Broadband, BigPond ADSL Broadband will allow you to play PS2 Network Gaming and download from the Internet at very respectable speeds. For \$89.95 a month you can play Network Gaming for as long as you want and enjoy unlimited downloads at 512kbps and uploads at 128kbps. Your speed may drop to 64kbps but you have to download 10GB before that happens.

WIRELESS BROADBAND KIT

For the really flash types who fancy being able to go online from any room in the house, BigPond offer an ADSL Wireless Kit for \$459 when you join

BigPond Broadband on a 12 month contract. Note, this price is subject to change from the time of printing. Take a look at www.gamearena.com.au/ps2mag for the latest offers and prices.

In just 10 minutes you can set this kit up yourself and be Network Gaming in no time. From then on you can use the normal \$89.95 ADSL unlimited monthly plan.

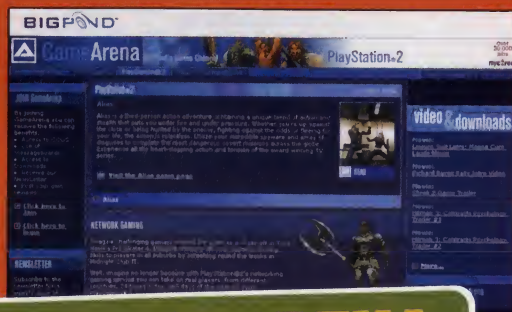
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ON SALE MAY 19



PART 2
You liked Part One? Well, since last issue we've battled through the rest of Final Fantasy to bring you the tough second instalment.

WE HAD SLEEPLESS NIGHTS FOR YOU!

FINAL FANTASY X-2

Create the most powerful, and snappily dressed RPG character ever with our guide!

FFX-2 WARNINGS

'Cos life has its tough times!

NOTE

With each chapter, the missions associated with each area change. For the purposes of percentage points, and to cover the story more completely, we'll be describing more areas than absolutely necessary. Feel free to skip over the parts you're not interested in doing.

ALSO NOTE

In order to keep some things interesting, most treasure chest locations have been left out of this guide. You're on your own for that one.

HOT TIP

A white mage in your party is a very good thing to have indeed. The most basic arrangement is: Yuna as white mage, Rikku as thief, and Paine as warrior. That way, for most battles, Yuna can do all the healing, Paine can do the whacking, and Rikku can steal stuff.

BEVELLE

Watch the scene, and head for the temple. Go inside, take the lift up, and walk around to the right. Talk to the men you see. Then go all the way around, and check that the toggle is red.

Go back to the main lift, head down, and go into the room on the left in the main area. Touch the pillar closest to the screen, and go back and take the main lift.

You should be in the area with the hole. Go out of this area, and save. If you want, take the next lift up to the area with the moving walkways to get some treasure chests. Then head back and jump down the hole.

Melana from Average Joe makes a cameo



Make your way back to the area where you fought Bahamut. You will see a very interesting cut-scene, and then have to fight a boss – Malboro. Take it down, and watch the next scene. Pick the sphere up off the ground, and go back to the Celsius. Talk to Shinra to watch the sphere. Then set a course for DJose Temple – the last stop for the chapter.

DJOSE TEMPLE

Try to have anti-petrification accessories equipped before you enter the temple, and a lot of Remedies if you don't have enough accessories – there is an enemy in here that is capable of petrifying your entire party.

Watch the cut-scene, and head into the temple and up the steps for another scene. Follow the hallway along until you get to a small symbol on the floor. There is treasure a bit further along. Stand on the symbol and activate the lift.

You'll be in a room with five pedestals. Push each of them back until the barrier in the doorway is deactivated. The pedestal which deactivates the barrier is random, and you'll have to fight a battle if you get the wrong one. Just keep going until you get it.

Then head up the steps for a boss battle. Try to keep your party at full health as much as you can for the duration of the battle. Wipe out ixion.

Watch the scene. Then, wander around a bit, or wait, until Yuna says she's all alone. Then start pressing (X) until you hear a whistle. Keep pressing (X), and a yellow ghost person will appear. Still, keep pressing (X). After pressing it four times, Yuna will run off the platform onto a glitter bridge, and the scene will end. This scene gives you percentage points, so if you're trying for 100%, reset and try again. Yuna will wake up in the Vegnagun Chamber.

CELSIUS

Again, run down to the Engine Room to grab the treasure,

then head to the Cabin to rest. When you've rested, go find Paine on the deck and talk to her. Head back to the Bridge and talk to Shinra to watch the spheres you got in the last chapter. Go and save.

Most of this chapter revolves around CommSpheres, and you'll be doing it from the Celsius. Also, watching all the scenes counts toward your percentage, so don't skip!

Go talk to Shinra to look at the CommSpheres. First, connect to Besaid. Turn the camera right to Wakka's house, and watch him rabbiting on. When he's done, connect to Kilika. Again, turn the camera to the right, and Dona will talk to you. Next, connect to Mushroom Rock Road to talk to Yaibal.

Finally, connect to Bevelle to talk to Maroda. If he doesn't appear, toggle the camera around a bit until he does. Since you sided with the Youth League, this Sphere will then be... er... disabled. Once that's done, go talk to Buddy, and then Paine. Then go save. We've got some pretty intensive viewing ahead.

BESAI COMMSPHERE

Talk to Shinra to access the Besaid CommSphere. You will need to look at it a total of seven times.

1. You will see two kids playing.
2. A dog will come and investigate the Sphere.
3. Wakka will come out of his house and act silly.
4. Aurochs blitzball practise.
5. Keepa will get hit in the stomach.
6. A short scene involving Beclan.
7. After a bit, the Sphere will go offline.

KILIKA TEMPLE COMMSPHERE

1. Zoom in on the door, and Barthello will appear. Zoom in on Barthello. He will break the Sphere. That's it for Kilika Temple.

LUCA COMMSPHERE

1. Shelinda will have an interview.
2. Shelinda will have an interview.
3. Shelinda will have an interview.

MI'IHEN HIGHROAD COMMSPHERE

1. There will be an investigation, in which you can participate. You have to make it so that Rikku or the Chocobo Eater is the culprit for 100% completion.

DJOSE TEMPLE COMMSPHERE

1. An Al Bhed will approach the sphere, and you will receive a primer.
2. An Al Bhed will enter and talk a little.
3. If you sent Lian and Ayde to DJose, you'll see them now. If not...

- 3a. An Al Bhed will enter and talk a little. Turn the camera a little to the right to see him talking to a woman.
4. The Al Bhed woman will talk a little.
5. The Al Bhed woman will steal the Sphere. That's it for Djose Temple.

GUADOSALAM COMMSPHERE

1. Watch a scene with Ormi. There are another six scenes available, but nothing that adds percentage, so only watch them if you're interested.

THUNDER PLAINS COMMSPHERE

1. When you hear chocobo sounds, turn the camera right. Zoom in three times to catch the chocobo.

MACALANIA ENTRANCE COMMSPHERE

1. The Macalania musicians will appear and talk a little. Wait until they disappear.

MACALANIA TRAVEL AGENCY COMMSPHERE

1. If you paid O'aka's debt before Chapter Two ended, O'aka will appear and talk to Yuna. Otherwise, and Al Bhed woman will appear. There are eight more scenes available, but nothing that adds percentage.

BIKANEL CAMP COMMSPHERE

1. Speak with Nhadala.

CALM LANDS CHOCOBO RANCH COMMSPHERE

1. Clasko will be petting a chocobo.
2. Talk with Clasko.

CALM LANDS TRAVEL AGENCY COMMSPHERE

1. View until you see the father of the unmarried man hide something in a treasure chest. This is 50,000 gil, which will be available later in the game. You might have to disconnect a couple of times if nothing happens.

MOUNT GAGAZET MOUNTAIN GATE COMMSPHERE

1. Talk with Kimahri.

MOUNT GAGAZET HOT SPRINGS COMMSPHERE

View 16 times, until the hot springs are empty. Okay, we're done! Go save, and talk to Buddy to get to the Moonflow.

MOONFLOW

Head towards Tobli's wagon. On the way, you will see him running off. Follow him until you get to the save sphere. Then turn around, and go into the previous screen. You will see Tobli running off again, so keep following him. Eventually, you will be passed by a hover driven by Tobli. Head back to the wagon, and then onwards to the shoopuf area. Take a shoopuf across the water, and head for Guadosalam. Talk to Tobli at the entrance to Guadosalam. Mission complete! Back to Celsius.

CELSIUS

Save, and head to the Cabin to talk to Rikku to start a

This isn't FF X-2; it's actually Prince's house in Southern California



mini-game. The easiest way to beat this mini-game is just to hammer on the buttons. Claim your prize, and head back to the Bridge for some more CommSpherin'.

BESAIID ISLAND COMMSPHERE

1. Zoom in on Beclam.
2. Move the camera right to talk to Lulu. Wait until Wakka comes into view as well.

KILIKA PORT COMMSPHERE

1. Zoom in on Dona.
2. Zoom in on Dona again.
3. A scene will unfold automatically.
4. A scene will unfold automatically.

KILIKA TEMPLE COMMSPHERE

1. No transmissions possible.

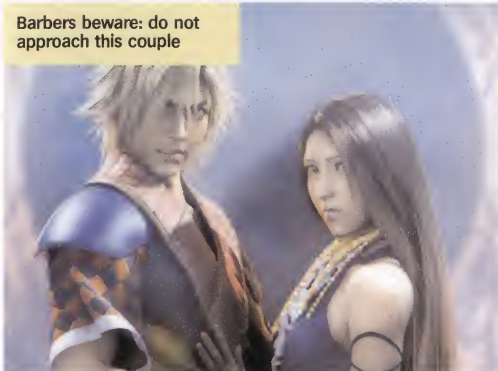
MUSHROOM ROCK ROAD COMMSPHERE

1. Talk with Lucil.
2. Talk with Yalbal.

MOONFLOW COMMSPHERE

1. If you sent Lian and Ayde to the Moonflow, you'll see them now.
- 1a. Zoom in on Elma. A shoopuf will break the

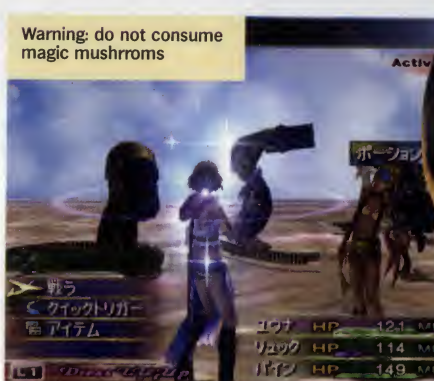
Barbers beware: do not approach this couple



Guaranteed to slice through any cut of meat



"Flatmates, thanks for coming. First on the agenda: who used all the loo paper?"



CommSphere. That's it for the Moonflow.

GUADOSALAM COMMSHERE

1. Watch a scene with Ormi. There are seven more scenes available, but nothing that adds percentage.

MACALANIA TRAVEL AGENCY COMMSHERE

1. Talk with O'aka. There are six more scenes available, but nothing that adds percentage.

ZANARKAND RUINS COMMSHERE

1. Watch a scene with Isaaru.
2. Talk with Isaaru.
3. Zoom in on Isaaru lying on the ground.
Okay, you're done! Go talk to Buddy about going to the Thunder Plains.

THUNDER PLAINS

You'll get a new mission to clean up the fiends, and defeat the boss. There is a red arrow on your map – follow it 'til you get to a Hypello. Talk to him to get full MP and HP.

There are a few chests floating around this area, so sniff them out, and then follow the red arrow until you get to the boss' nest. Take out Zalamander. Mission complete! Head back to the Celsius.

CELSIUS

It's concert time! Speak to Rikku first, immediately. Keep talking to her until she responds with regular text boxes –

if you wait too long, she'll go stand near Shinra, and your percentage will be screwed. Then go do the same with Brother, Buddy and Paine. Finally, talk to Shinra, and then Rikku to trigger another scene. Go save, and then go speak to Tobli when you are happy with your completion of Chapter Four. Watch the movie. It's fun!

After the concert, speak to Maechen (the old guy). Buddy will come and tell you to go talk to LeBlanc in the Engine Room. Don't talk to Shinra, it'll stuff up your percentage. Go straight there, and watch the scene that ensues.

You CAN go straight to the end of the game from here by talking to Brother. Let's go the long way around instead.

Talk to Shinra to watch Crimson Record 5, then go talk to Buddy for the moment of truth. If you've completed everything so far, then every area on the map except Bevelle will be a hotspot. If not – better luck next time. If they are all hotspots, then we'll be visiting each area for an Episode complete and a dressphere at the end of it.

Now, go rest. You should be woken up by a scene between Buddy and the Barkeep. Then go down to the Engine Room, and try to open one of the chests for a scene. Grab the treasures, and go back to

The Scud often dreams about Delta serenading him. Aaahh!



the Bridge. First stop – Zanarkand!

ZANARKAND RUINS

Speak to Maechen near the save sphere, and listen to his story. Then run down to the temple. You can't get in, so go back to the Celsius.

BESAID ISLAND

After the scene, run into the village, follow Wakka to the temple, and talk to him there. Then, head for the beach. On the screen with the waterfalls, jump underneath the first bridge for a special item. There are also some items in the cipher cave.

Head over to the docks on the beach and talk to Beclan. Head back to village, speaking to Wakka on the way, and watch the cut-scene there. Episode complete! You'll be back on the Celsius.

KILIKA ISLAND

There are treasure chests scattered around the village. Go look for them if you're interested. Then, if you spoke to the telescope guy in Chapters One and Three, you can take a ferry across to the new HQ. There are treasures to be had, so hunt them down before heading back.

Head for the Woods. On the far right path is a tree bending over the water you can jump into. You'll find the seventh Cactuar Gatekeeper here, so nab him. Then jump down, and keep going to the temple. If you missed any monkeys earlier, you can get them now, too. Start up the temple steps for a scene. Episode complete!

This is what it looks like when your spectacles are made from crystals



You'll be back on the Celsius. There are treasure boxes in Kilika Temple, so go back for them if you want. Then it's on to Luca.

LUCA

The blitzball tournament is on! You can talk to the woman at the counter in front of the stadium to play anytime you want, so don't feel you're missing anything by turning down Buddy's offer. There's nothing to be gained by playing it, anyway.

Head for the balcony overlooking Luca Square near the save sphere. Watch the scene, and a moogles will appear. Follow the little bugger.

You'll find yourself on a ramp leading to a boat on the docks. More cut-scene madness will ensue. Congratulations, you've completed the episode.

MI'IHEN HIGHROAD

Talk to Rin. Episode Complete!

You can now ride chocobos down the highroad! About time! So, talk to the hover pilots to jump on a chocobo, and make for the Travel Agency, picking up the treasures along the way.

Keep going until you reach the screen after the two bridges. You'll see a gap in the grass on the left-hand side, just to the left of the first pillar. Stand there a moment, and you'll be able to jump across. Do it, grab the treasure, and jump back. Then, jump across again. You should fall into a pit. Grab the item there. Keep going to the save sphere, to get back to the Celsius.

MUSHROOM ROCK ROAD

Talk to Lucil and Elma up the road and the first left. Then go back out to the lift to the left of DJose Highroad for some treasure.

Head back to the area where you saw Lucil and Elma. Yaibal will be there. Talk to him to get a new mission – to win seven battles in a row.

Your first battle will be with Yaibal and two soldiers. Then, follow the path for the remaining battles. You can heal in between if you need to. The last three battles are consecutive. Mission Complete! There will be a short cut-scene. Episode Complete!

Return to Mushroom Rock Road from the Celsius, and head for the Youth League HQ. At the lift up to the HQ, there will be a chest nearby. Get the treasure. Take the lift up to the HQ, enter the main building, and talk to Lucil on the Observation Deck (not the Balcony). Return to the Celsius and watch the Sphere.

DJOSE TEMPLE

Enter the temple to get a new mission. Choose to take on the experiment. In order to complete the DJose Temple episode, you'll need to beat the experiment twice – once at its lowest level, and once at its highest. You need parts from the Bikanel Desert and five repair manuals from all over Spira to get it to level five, so just fight it once for now.

Talk to the man in the room to the left of the Cloister of Trials. He'll give you an item that lets you fight the experiment again. Save it for when it's at level five. The repair manuals are at the following locations:

1. In the DJose Temple Cloister of Trials, in the room with the five pedestals. Talk to the guy in there and input the keyword MARNELA to get the manual.
 2. In the room on the left in the DJose temple – talk to the Al Bhed sitting in there to get the second manual.
 3. In the top right area of DJose Temple, there are three monkeys. Wait till they start jumping. When all three monkeys are in the air at the same time, hit \otimes to receive the third manual.
 4. In a treasure chest in the Chocobo Ranch secret dungeon*, you'll find the fourth manual.
 5. Examine all the machina along the Mi'ihen Highroad. One of them has the fifth manual. Go back to the Celsius.
- *To open the secret dungeon you need to do the following:
1. Raise four Level 1 chocobos; send three of them out, and have them all return.
 2. Raise four Level 2 chocobos; send three of them out, and have them all return.
 3. Raise four Level 3 chocobos; send three of them out, and have them all return.
 4. Raise four Level 4 chocobos; send three of them out, and have them all return.
 5. Raise four Level 5 chocobos; send three of them out, and have them all return.
 6. Leave the chocobo ranch, and re-enter – Clasko will tell you the chocobos found a secret dungeon. Go to the back of the Ranch, and jump down the hole. Sounds fun, eh?

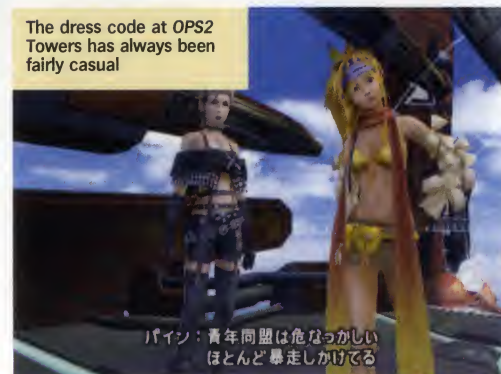
MOONFLOW

Go one screen right and talk to Tobli. Go onstage. Simply press \odot when you've had enough. Episode complete!

The Bulldogs threw a party and hardly anyone showed. Funny that



The dress code at OPS2 Towers has always been fairly casual



"And, we held hands. But Amy saw us and she told Brad. She's such a bitch..."



GUADOSALAM

Make your way towards Chateau LeBlanc. Your progress will be interrupted by a cut-scene. Go inside for another cut-scene. Go back outside, take the path on the right, and go through the door there to get a cool item. Go back along the path, and speak to Tromell. That's another Episode Complete!

You'll be back on the Celsius. But you can now get into the house on the left of Guadosalam that you couldn't enter before! So go back, talk to Tromell to get Inside, and get a Sphere from one of the chests, and an Item from the other, after watching the cut-scene. Go back to the Celsius, and watch the Sphere. Then, make the journey to the Thunder Plains.

The Snoop Dogg costume is popular at fancy dress parties



Whenever in danger, cuddle the nearest person. Safety first!



THUNDER PLAINS

You'll get a new mission – there are fiends at each of the lightning towers, so go take 'em out. The last one will be the one across the water that you had to calibrate by remote – follow the arrow on your map.

The boss Humbaba is quite strong, so make sure the girls stay at pretty much full health as best you can. Don't use lightning attacks and you'll be fine. Mission complete!

Congratulations, you've opened a secret dungeon! Go back to the Travel Agency and save before going in. Poisonproof and Lightning Eater are good things to have equipped. Talk to the AI Bhed to get into the dungeon.

You'll find Cid by turning right three times, left three times, then the second left, but he'll only be here if you talked to him in the Thunder Plains both times earlier in the game. There is a quicker way, but you miss out on two of the chests. There is also a chest deeper in the dungeon. If you skip the second left, and take the second left after that, you'll find it. Talk to Cid to trigger a boss fight.

There will be three watchers in this battle. Take them down first with normal attacks. If you did this every time you saw them up til now, this boss will be fairly easy. If not, you may be in trouble. Take down the Machina Panzer. Episode complete!

You'll be back on the Celsius. Go to the Deck to talk to Cid. Then go back down the Bridge, and watch the scene. You can go back to the secret dungeon now for more running around if you want. It makes no real difference to the story, though, so we're leaving it out.

MACALANIA WOODS

Head up over the glitter bridge until you get to the good ol' crossroads. Need we mention, there be treasure in the Woods? Aaar, matey. Go hunting first if you want.

Take the upper right fork, and talk to the person there. Then, go back and take the upper left fork to Lake Macalanla for a scene with O'aka. Episode complete!

Go back to the crossroads, and take the lower right fork to the glitter bridge, and all the way back to the entrance. Then, go two screens right and take the path down for a scene. Then go to the water's edge for another scene. Episode complete! Now it's back to the Celsius.

MOUNT GAGAZET

Walk down toward the Calm Lands for a scene. Then, talk to Klimahri to trigger another scene. Head up to the

"Oh! Hi Brad! How's Kelly? She did what? Oh, I had no idea! Let's talk over dinner."



teleport pad, and warp to the Mountain Trail. Follow the path up to the left for another scene. Episode complete!

Go back to Mount Gagazet from the Celsius. You'll be at the top near the hot springs. Climb the cliffs to the left, and follow the path until you see a group of Ronso. Go right and across a small bridge. Talk to Lian and Ayde. Then return to the Celsius.

BIKANEL DESERT

Talk to the hover pilot to get to Cactuar Nation. It's time to return Gatekeeper number seven. You will also pick up the last three.

8. On Mount Gagazet. If you completed the episode earlier, you'll be dropped at the top. Climb down the cliff and follow the path right until you get to the first area with snow. The Cactuar is near the edge of the cliff.

9. The next Cactuar is in Dona's house on Killika Island. It's directly to the left as you go in the door.

When you take the ninth Gatekeeper back, talk to Marnela to get access to the rogue Cactuar lair. This is where the tenth Gatekeeper is. Enter the lair, and take the upper path for an item. Then head back and take the right path. You will fall into the sand and it will start to rise. You can do this bit as many times as you need, especially since there is treasure is on the way.

Climb out of the sand at the other end, and follow the path until you find the tenth Gatekeeper. Once you have him in your clutches, it's time for a boss battle. Take out the Jumbo Cactuar. Mission complete!

Back at Cactuar Nation, you'll get a new mission – to defeat the desert fiend, Angra Mainyu. This is possibly the toughest boss of the game, so choose "yes" to go back to the airship and heal up. You might want to come back later, after visiting the Via Infinito dungeon, to defeat it, but we'll go over it now.

Re-enter Bikanel desert, and you will be thrown into the battle. Angra Mainyu has three stages: Angra Mainyu, Tawrich and Zarich. Tawrich is immune to magical attacks, and Zarich is immune to physical attacks. The easiest way to win is to drain Angra's MP. Your lineup is up to you, but a Dark Knight, a Samurai, a Berserker, or an Alchemist are all good things to have in your party. Try to keep your health up as much as possible, and beat the crap out of it. Mission complete! Now to go digging for the parts needed to fight the Experiment one more time.

You can't dig in the Central Expanse until you've dispatched a chocobo to that area. Pick a chocobo that you don't mind losing, because it will run away. Dispatch the chocobo, and you can now go dig there.

To get parts, just dig around all the areas until you have parts totalling 38 or more points. Now you can go back to DJose Temple and take out the Experiment L5.

DJOSE TEMPLE

Beat Experiment L5. Episode complete!

BEVELLE

Make for the Temple, and watch the scene with Maroda. Episode complete! Go into the temple, and go into the room on the right, where you will see a brief scene. Then save the game, and move onto the teleport pad. Pick up the sphere.

The Via Infinito Dungeon is in this area. You need to beat it to get 100% completion. It is 100 levels deep. It has pretty standard, but randomised, floor layouts. It's not too hard to navigate, but the fighting's pretty tough.

To get to the dungeon, follow the path from where you found the sphere until you find a hole in the ground. Jump into it. You are now in Via Infinito. The aim is to find a pit you can jump into. This will take you to the next level. There are also teleport pads on each level that will take you out of the dungeon so that you can heal up and save. You can re-enter the dungeon where you left off.

At Level 20, there is a boss to fight and a sphere to be had. He shouldn't be too difficult for a seasoned fighter. You can continue on, or you can go back to the Celsius. Talk to Shinra to watch your shiny new spheres. Then set a course for the Calm Lands.

CALM LANDS

If you successfully got over 400 PR points, you will see a scene. Episode complete!

Talk to the guy on the left of the Travel Agency, and the bachelor's father. Then go behind the agency to get that 50,000 gil. There are all sorts of lovely treasures to be had in the Calm Lands.

MUSHROOM ROCK ROAD

We can open that mysterious door in the Den of Woes now. So head in that direction. Save before you go in. Touch the door to open it. There will be a small cut-scene. Follow the red arrow on your map to a large room. You will see another cut-scene. Then, you'll have to fight Rikku.

Yuna will be alone for this battle, so watch her health. After you defeat Rikku, you'll have to fight Palne. Again, Yuna will be alone. Now, you will have to fight Baralai. Rikku and Palne are back in your party. Take him out.

Next is Gippal. Give him what-for. Finally, you'll have to fight Noojy-woojy. Make him cry like a baby. Episode complete!

You'll be back onboard the Celsius. If you want, go and clean up your loose ends. You can come back to it after the end to get your 100% completion, though, so it's not imperative. Go talk to Brother. We're going to the Farplane.

FARPLANE

If you see an enemy called Aeshma in this area, use Holy attacks to take it out. After you've spoken to Brother and watched the cut-scene, you'll be on a platform. Jump across to the main path and follow it along. You'll come to a fork. The left leads to a chest. Continue down the right path and jump on the left platform – the other takes you back to the beginning. Jump down for a boss battle – Shiva. Trigger Happy and fire attacks work well. Save at the sphere that appears, and continue to the next large platform. Now, defeat the Magus Sisters.

Continue on to the next boss battle, Anima. When you've beaten Anima, you'll see a cut-scene, and be in the Farplane Abyss. Go to the left to speak to LeBlanc, Ormi and Logos. Use the sphere to beam up to the Celsius.

Go to the Cabin to watch a scene. Then return to the Bridge and tell Brother you want to go to Kilika Temple. You will be on a platform. Jump across to the path, and run down the path, dodging the flames. Eventually you'll be back at the Farplane Abyss. Use the save sphere to return to the Celsius.

Talk to Brother again, and choose to go to Djose Temple. Run down the path, and when you get to the group of platforms, jump onto the right-hand platform to go across to the larger island.

The glowing spot at the end resets the platforms. You can push the three platforms closest to the large island into the three further ones. Push the platform closest to you to platform 3, the middle platform to platform 2, and the furthest platform to platform 1.

Take the newly formed bridge and head down the path. The small platform in front of the next large platform takes you to a whole bunch of chests. Continue down the path, and when you get to the Farplane Abyss again, beam back to the Celsius.



Then go back to Brother, and repeat the processes for Bevelle and the Calm Lands Gorge. Save at the Farplane Abyss, and walk over into the reddish fog. Choose "yes".

Go over to the left and step on the circular symbol to bring up some musical notes. Then move over to the keyboard and hit \otimes to bring up the sheet music and keyboard keys. Play the game to deactivate the nearby barrier, on the right side of the room.

Follow the path along. You will come across barriers and more symbols. Wait until the barriers flash off and step on the symbols for more notes.

When you get to a chest, jump across and follow the path to the right and down. You can keep going along the main path, but you'll have to fight a pretty tough boss, and there's not much point.

Step on the symbol at the end of the path to get the notes, and return to the keyboard to input the notes. This will deactivate the next barrier. Return to the main path, and take the upper right fork. About halfway up, jump off to the right and step on the symbol. Go to the left, and it will bring you to another symbol on a ledge. Then jump back down to the fork in the road, and take the upper left path.

Just past the second static barrier, climb onto the ledge on the right. Go to the keyboard to input the notes. This will deactivate the last barrier. Go back to the main path, and follow it to get a scene and a sphere, which you will watch.

Then, it's another, more difficult musical puzzle. You can talk to Picket to reset the puzzle, or to view the notes again. Once you've deactivated the final barrier, go and save. It's time to face the Vegnagun.

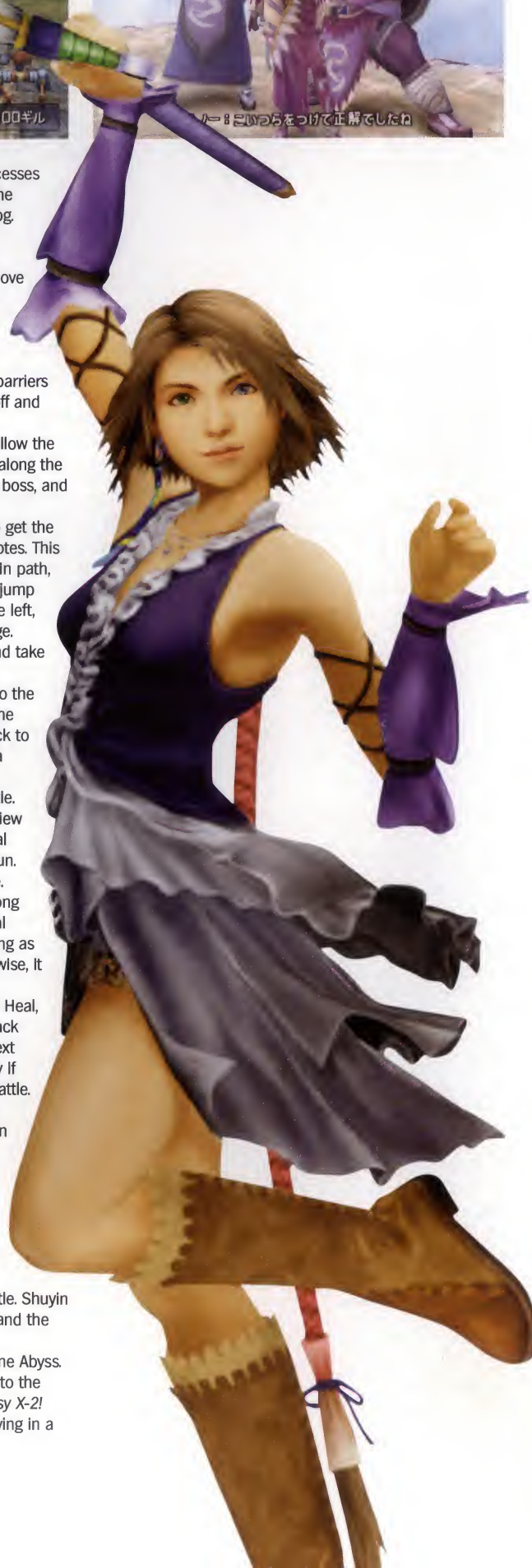
Head up the path. There will be a brief scene. Climb the steps all the way up to the top for a long scene. Continue on for the first in a series of final battles. The Vegnagun (Tail) should be okay as long as you keep everyone healed up at all times. Otherwise, it could go a little hard on you.

After the fight, help LeBlanc, Ormi and Logos. Heal, and go to the far side of the platform, and fall back down to the main path. Follow it along for the next battle. The Vegnagun (Leg) should go pretty easily if you ignore the Nodes. Continue on to the next battle.

The Vegnagun (Core) is accompanied by two Bulwarks. Take them out first, and concentrate on the Core. When it revives them, take them out again quickly. You will then get another battle straight away. The Vegnagun (Head) is accompanied by two Redoubts. Use the same strategy as with the core. This is a timed battle, so hit it hard, and with everything you've got. Don't ignore healing, though.

After a brief scene, it's time for your final battle. Shuyin is NOT a shoe-in. Use a white mage for healing, and the other two to attack. Give him merry hell.

After a scene, you will see Yuna at the Farplane Abyss. Press \otimes straight away, and answer affirmatively to the Fayth's question. You've now finished *Final Fantasy X-2*! Give yourself a gold star and enjoy the show. Saving in a NEW slot is a good idea here.



CODE-U-LIKE

Need to cheat your way to victory on a certain game? Here are the codes you should use.

MX UNLEASHED

(SLES TBC)

Unlock Supercross Tracks

Enter STUPERCROSS

Unlock National Tracks

Enter ECONATION

Unlock Freestyle Tracks

Enter BUSTBIG

Unlock Pro Physics

Enter SWAPPIN

Unlock Expert AI

Enter OBTGOFAST

Unlock all the machines

Enter MINIGAMES

Unlock the 50cc Bikes

Enter SQUIRRELD OG

Unlock the 500cc Bikes

Enter BIGDOGS

Unlock Career Completion

Enter CLAPPEDOUT

Unlock AI Bowling

Enter WRECKINGBALL

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN

(SLES 518976)

In the Options menu hold L1+R1 and enter the following:

All reward Cars

ⓧ, ○, ⓧ, ○

Credits

ⓧ, ○, ○, ○, ○

Speedometer display

△, △, ○, ○

Brick Car

○, ○, △, ○

Tripping mode

△, ○, △, ○

Night time mode

ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ

Blow up vehicles in one hit

△, △, ○, ○

Faster cars

○, ○, ○, ○

Fastest cars

△, △, △, △

Infinite car health

△, ⓧ, △, ⓧ

Press horn to do a huge leap in your car

○, ○, ○, △

More camera angles

○, ○, ○, ⓧ

Grid mode

○, ⓧ, ○, △

TRUE CRIME STREETS OF LA

(SLES 517532)

Enter these while on the Pause menu:

All Driving Upgrades Unlocked

↑, →, ←, →, ⓧ

All Fighting Moves Unlocked

↑, ↓, ↑, ↓, ⓧ

All Gunplay Skills Unlocked

→, ←, →, ←, ⓧ

Bigger Car (must be in car)

↓, ↓, ↓, ⓧ

Boost

↑, ⓧ, ⓧ, ⓧ

Impound garage cars unlocked

↑, →, ↓, ←, ↑, ⓧ

Shows Nick Kang's Current Location

ⓧ, ○, ○, △

JAMES BOND 007: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

(SLES 52002)

Enter the following codes in the pause menu (while playing the game) after the appropriate Platinum award has been achieved.

All weapons

○, △, ⓧ, ⓧ, ○

Cloak

○, △, ⓧ, △, ○

Double ammo

○, ○, ⓧ, ○, △

Double damage

○, △, △, ○, ○

Easier movement in vehicle

○, ⓧ, ⓧ, ○, △

Full ammo

○, ○, △, ○, ○

Full battery

○, △, △, ⓧ, ○

Golden Gun

○, △, ⓧ, ○, △

Improved battery

○, ○, ○, ⓧ, ○

Platinum gun

○, ○, ○, ○, ⓧ

Slow-motion driving

○, ⓧ, △, ⓧ, △

Unlimited ammo

○, ⓧ, ○, ⓧ, ○

Unlimited battery

○, ○, ○, ○, △

CRASH NITRO KART

(SLES TBC)

Complete the following objectives to unlock the corresponding features.

Dingodile

Beat Red Gem Cup

Fake Crash

Do 50 consecutive boosts on any track in adventure mode on the Evil team

Little Velo

Get 100% completion with both Team Bandicoot and Team Cortex

N. Tropy

Defeat all N. Trophy ghosts in the Time Trial mode

Polar

Beat Blue Gem Cup

Pura

Do 50 consecutive boosts on any track in adventure mode on the Bandicoot team

Velo

Earn two Sceptors in Adventure mode (one with each team)

Zam

Beat Purple Gem Cup

Zem

Beat Green Gem Cup

SONIC HEROES

(SLES TBC)

Two-player Team Battle

Collect 20 emblems in the story or challenge modes to unlock the two-player team battle

Two-player Special Stage

Collect 40 emblems in the story or challenge modes to unlock the two-player special stage

Super Hard difficulty

Beat the game with 141 Emblems and all A ratings

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PIN	GAME	CHEAT
10133	Blade 2	Infinite Health
10134	Blade 2	Unlimited Ammo
10132	Blade 2	All Weapons
10131	Blade 2	All Levels
20343	Cat in the Hat	Bonus Door Keys
20341	Cat in the Hat	All Levels
20342	Cat in the Hat	Extra Life
15812	Dead to Rights	All Disarms Open
15814	Dead to Rights	Level Select
15815	Dead to Rights	Invisibility
15813	Dead to Rights	Endless Armour
15811	Dead to Rights	10,000 Bullets
15816	Dead to Rights	Invincibility
13472	Die Hard Vendetta	Flame On
13471	Die Hard Vendetta	Invincibility
13473	Die Hard Vendetta	Liquid Metal Textures
13474	Die Hard Vendetta	Big Heads
13475	Die Hard Vendetta	Small Heads
13476	Die Hard Vendetta	Exploding Fists
17551	Finding Nemo	Bonus Level
17554	Finding Nemo	Level Select
17552	Finding Nemo	End Credits
17553	Finding Nemo	God Mode
19674	NFS: Underground	Unlock all Sprint Tracks
19673	NFS: Underground	Unlock all Circuit Tracks
19672	NFS: Underground	Unlock all Drift Tracks
19671	NFS: Underground	Unlock all Drag Tracks
01551	Operation Winback	Level Select
01552	Operation Winback	Weapons and Ammo
01553	Operation Winback	One Hit Kills
01554	Operation Winback	All Multiplayer Characters
11352	Primal	Easy Kill
11351	Primal	Invincibility
19181	Prince Of Persia	Level Select
03972	Prisoner of War	All Chapters
03971	Prisoner of War	Unlimited Goodies
18975	Simpsons: Hit & Run	Blow up Vehicles In one Hit
18971	Simpsons: Hit & Run	All Reward Cars
18976	Simpsons: Hit & Run	Night Time Mode
18974	Simpsons: Hit & Run	Jumping Car
18973	Simpsons: Hit & Run	Faster Cars
18972	Simpsons: Hit & Run	Infinite Car Health
85422	Sims Bustin' Out	All Locations
85421	Sims Bustin' Out	Gnome Cheat
85423	Sims Bustin' Out	All Objects
85424	Sims Bustin' Out	All Skins
85425	Sims Bustin' Out	Money
07954	Superman: Shadow of Akropolis	Unlock All Biographies
07951	Superman: Shadow of Akropolis	Infinite Super Power
07952	Superman: Shadow of Akropolis	Infinite Health
07953	Superman: Shadow of Akropolis	Unlock All Movies
07391	Soldier of Fortune Gold Edition	Invincibility
07392	Soldier of Fortune Gold Edition	Full Ammo
07393	Soldier of Fortune Gold Edition	Heavy Weapons
07394	Soldier of Fortune Gold Edition	Hand and Explosive Weapons
15081	The Hulk	Play as Grey Hulk
15082	The Hulk	Invincibility
15087	The Hulk	Double Health for Hulk
15086	The Hulk	Double Health for Enemies
15084	The Hulk	Regenerator
15088	The Hulk	Half Enemies HP
15085	The Hulk	Unlimited Continues
15083	The Hulk	Level Select
09872	The Scorpion King	Full Health and Weapons
09871	The Scorpion King	Master Code
05404	The Simpsons: Road Rage	Christmas Mode
05403	The Simpsons: Road Rage	Thanksgiving Mode
05402	The Simpsons: Road Rage	New Year's Day Mode
05401	The Simpsons: Road Rage	Halloween Mode
11811	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Level Select
11812	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	All Special Features
11813	Tom Clancy's Ghost Recon	Invincibility
12271	Tomb Raider Angel of Darkness	Level Skip
17534	True Crime: Streets of LA	Impound Garage Cars Unlocked
17531	True Crime: Streets of LA	All Driving Upgrades
17532	True Crime: Streets of LA	All Fighting Moves
17533	True Crime: Streets of LA	All Gunplay Skills
12202	Ty The Tasmanian Tiger	Unlock all Technorangs
12201	Ty The Tasmanian Tiger	Show All Items
07671	V8 Supercars Race Driver	Realistic Handling
07672	V8 Supercars Race Driver	Better Damage
12133	World of Outlaws SprintCars	All Tracks
12131	World of Outlaws SprintCars	Money
12132	World of Outlaws SprintCars	All Drivers
07131	Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2	BMW Z8
07132	Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2	HSV Coupe GTS
07134	Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2	Ferrari F50
07135	Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2	Ferrari F550
07133	Need for Speed Hot Pursuit 2	McLaren F1
10541	Midnight Club II	All Locations
10542	Midnight Club II	All Cars
10543	Midnight Club II	Unlock All
12301	Minority Report	Invincibility
12303	Minority Report	Infinite Ammo
12302	Minority Report	All Weapons
07895	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	Full Homing
07894	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	Full Beam
07893	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	All Weapons
07892	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	Level Select
07891	Men In Black 2: Alien Escape	Invincibility

gamestation

Your definitive guide to the ever-expanding library of PlayStation 2 games

So you've just bought a PlayStation 2, and you're immediately confronted by a dauntingly huge line-up of games to choose from at your local gaming store. Now what?

GameStation is *OPS2's* one-stop guide to getting an idea of what's hot and what's not. As time goes on and new games come out, we drop some of the older games that don't warrant being remembered, replacing them with newer games that score well in the reviews section.

As PlayStation 2 owners we really are spoiled for choice. There is a massive choice of AAA quality games – many of which are bound to fall under your radar. *OPS2* is here to make sure that not too many of them manage to slip through your fingers.

If you just want to find the best of the best, look for the games that receive a Bronze, Silver or Gold award. Enjoy your search!

GLOSSARY

Just got your PS2? It's your first console ever and you've bought the best magazine to give the latest and most up-to-date information but don't have a clue what we're going on about? Well, without wanting to patronise those gamers who've been around since the Atari 2600 by spelling out the meaning of gaming terms and acronyms in the reviews and previews, here's your 'at a glance' guide to all things PS2 and technical.

Afterburn: An extra kick of power in flight sims.

AI: Artificial Intelligence.

Analogue: Re: Dual Shock 2. Registering degrees of input, as opposed to digital's on/off status.

Boards: Snowboarders or games featuring the alpine sport.

Colin-op: Colin-operated arcade videogames.

Cut-scene: Explanatory, non-playable scene in videogame (also 'FMV').

CPU: Central Processor Unit. Brains of PS2.

Dev kits: Programmable PS2s used by developers.

D-pad: Direction pad on PS2 controller.

Dual Shock controller: Controller for PSone.

Dual Shock 2: Controller designed for PS2 (with analogue).

ECTS: European Computer Trade Show.

E3: Electronic Entertainment Expo (US).

Frame rate: Number of images drawn per second in games. Higher frame rate = smoother animation.

FPS: First-Person Shooter (eg *Quake III*).

Hack 'n' slash: Refers to game (usually fantasy) featuring blade combat.

High res: High resolution (graphics).

HUD: Head Up Display. Screen furniture such as map, speedometer, etc.

Iconography: Graphical shorthand defining game, genre etc.

Low res: Refers to poor quality graphics.

L3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's left joystick.

Mini-games: Bonus, playable games found in larger titles.

Polygon: Building block of videogame graphics.

PSone: The precursor to PS2. If you don't know what this is then frankly there's no hope for you.

Real-time: When one second of game time equals one second in the real world.

RPG: Role-playing game.

RTS: Real-time strategy.

R3: Pressing down on the PS2 controller's right joystick.

Sim: Simulation.

Strafe: Move sideways while looking straight.

USB: Port to connect peripherals such as a keyboard to PS2.

"If there's a term, word or phrase that's still taking your brain cells, let us know and we'll include it here."

HACK - VOL 1: INFECTION ★ OVERALL 08

An addictive new spin on the RPG genre that takes it into new territory.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

007 NIGHTFIRE ★ OVERALL 08

Aside from the occasionally lffy AI, this has enough variety to make a solid single player game, and the multiplayer gives it longevity.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

18 WHEELER OVERALL 06

Brash, chunky and colourful truck racer. Unfortunately it just doesn't offer enough substance to satisfy the hardened gamer.

2002 FIFA WORLD CUP OVERALL 07

The World Cup version of FIFA 2002 with more pizzazz, nifty effects for star players and a serious challenge at the highest difficulty level, but sadly lacking in game modes.

ACE COMBAT: DISTANT THUNDER OVERALL 07

Best Ace Combat yet. A graphically-polished flight sim with a variety of missions. Best with a flight-stick of some kind.

AFL LIVE PREMIERSHIP EDITION OVERALL 06

Plays a better game of footy, but it's not a vast improvement over its predecessor.

AGGRESSIVE INLINE ★ OVERALL 08

There's more than enough inline action to keep you impressed and entertained until the next Tony Hawk says, "Buy me, dude!"

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

AIRBLADE ★ OVERALL 08

Intricate visuals, sublime handling, massive airs – everything you could want hoverboarding to be. Back to the Future anyone?

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

ALL-STAR BASEBALL 2002 OVERALL 07

An enjoyable all-round game of baseball with oodles of depth, and surprisingly compelling to watch as well as to play.

AMPLITUDE ★ OVERALL 08

An addictive mixture of reflexes and music timing. Weak graphics but great gameplay.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

AQUA AQUA: WETRIX 2.0 OVERALL 07

Addictive, well-realised update of the N64 puzzler Wetrrix. Essentially it's Tetris with water. Weird, but worthwhile.

ARC THE LAD: TWILIGHT OF THE SPIRITS OVERALL 07

It isn't original but *Arc the Lad* is a welcome addition to the list of next-generation RPGs.

ARMORED CORE 2 OVERALL 07

Infinitely-tweakable first-person mech shooter. Not for the casual gamer after a quick fix, but perfect for those who love their sims.

ARMY MEN AIR ATTACK: BLADE'S REVENGE OVERALL 02

Very dull helicopter game. Hardly surprising from arguably the worst series of games to grace a console.

ARMY MEN: GREEN ROGUE OVERALL 01

On-rail shooter that manages to sink to new depths of soldiering tedium. Avoid at all costs.

ATV OFFROAD FURY 2 ★ OVERALL 08

More of the same, with new tracks, riders, racing modes and plenty of good old fashioned fun.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

AUTO MODELLISTA ★ OVERALL 08

The love-child of cel-shaded graphics and Gran Turismo. Despite its cartoony appearance, this is a fairly serious racing game.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

BACKYARD WRESTLING: DON'T TRY THIS AT HOME OVERALL 06

When they titled this brawler *Don't Try This At Home* – did they mean the game?

BALDUR'S GATE: DARK ALLIANCE II OVERALL 07

Worthwhile if you're after a hack 'n' slash with D&D style, but the game shows its age worse than *Cher*.

YOUR KEY TO SHORTLIST

GOLD
Only for games that scored the elusive 10/10.

SILVER
Awarded to games with a mighty 9/10.

BRONZE
Given to games that scored an impressive 8/10.

SMALLER LEVELS, FEWER WEAPONS

Games to play before the sequel makes them obsolete. Hurry!



As you might have noticed if you had, say, looked at the cover of this issue, there's a new *Spider-Man* game on its way to PS2. The game based on the first blockbuster movie a couple of years ago was good for its time, but will soon be rendered pretty much irrelevant by the sequel, which looks to improve on it in every possible way. Track it down ASAP and enjoy it while you can! The levels cover a number of gameplay styles, from creeping around inside bad guy-infested buildings and taking dudes out without being spotted, to all-out beat-'em-up action, to sprawling stages set high above the city (where Spidey gets around by swinging from an invisible ceiling). Plus you can play as the Green Goblin on his hover-board!

BEYOND GOOD & EVIL ★ OVERALL 08

Compelling and original. It manages to cross multiple genres and is bizarre, unique and engaging all at once.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

BLOODRAYNE ★ OVERALL 08

BloodRayne is an explosion of sex, action and violence. It's not going to tax your mind but it's so much fun you won't care.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

BOMBERMAN KART OVERALL 07

As much fun as four people can have with fifty bucks. It's worth it just for the original 2D Bomberman.

BUFFY 2: CHAOS BLOODS OVERALL 07

Full of action and adventure, *Chaos Bloods* is a worthy addition to the *Buffy* legacy.

BURNOUT 2: POINT OF IMPACT ★ OVERALL 08

An even more intense racing experience than its predecessor. *The Fast & the Furious* in a video game.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

CASTLEVANIA: LAMENT OF INNOCENCE ★ OVERALL 09

Better whip and dungeon action than Larry Wachowski's last all-nighter at the Hellfire Club.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

CHAMPIONS OF NORRATH ★ OVERALL 08

While it doesn't reinvent the *Baldur's Gate* wheel, it does refine it so that even RPG haters will be charmed.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

CLUB FOOTBALL ★ OVERALL 08

The second best soccer game on PS2. Superior to the FIFA games but PES still gives it a thrashing.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

COLIN MCRAE RALLY 4 ★ OVERALL 09

One for experts and newbies alike, *Colin 4* is a superlative rally sim with a tank full of fun.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

CONFLICT DESERT STORM II ★ OVERALL 08

It's not perfect but it improves on its predecessor by a long shot. War may be hell but this certainly isn't.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

CONTRA: SHATTERED SOLDIER OVERALL 07

A fantastic trip down memory lane for old school veterans, but *Contra* may confuse or confound the contemporary gamer.

CRASH NITRO KART OVERALL 06

With a little spit and polish, *CNK* could have been in pole position, but its faults leave it lagging behind.

CRAZY TAXI ★ OVERALL 08

Arcade thrills aplenty in this no-holds-barred city-smashing racer. If you want speed, buy this now.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

CRICKET 2004 OVERALL 07

Howzat? Not outstanding. Comes close to being great, but falls short due to the inherited flaws of *Cricket 2002*.

DANCE UK OVERALL 07

Great songs (Junior Senior, Sophie Ellis-Bextor, Run DMC), excellent add-ons (non-slip mat, karaoke headset) and great value. Well worth a punt – and it'll get you back in shape!

DANCING STAGE MEGAMIX OVERALL 07

Top sweaty disco fun, marred by a flimsy selection of songs. All together now – big fish, little fish, cardboard box.

DARK CHRONICLE ★ OVERALL 09

If you've finished *FFX* and need a new fix, look no further. This is top-tier RPG fare, an essential purchase.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

DEF JAM VENDETTA ★ OVERALL 08

Some more options would have made this a true champion, but it's still a worthy contender. *SmackDown* watch out!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

DEUS EX ★ OVERALL 09

The thinking man's action shooter and genre-busting game that redefines expectations. Superb.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

DEVIL MAY CRY

Melding battling with lush surroundings and a superb gothic atmosphere. One of the best PS2 games yet? Definitely.

DEVIL MAY CRY 2

Die-hards may cry at the new direction, but there's still enough gorgeous style and firearms in DMC2 to satisfy action junkies.

DISNEY'S EXTREME SKATE ADVENTURE

Just as fun as any other skater out there, just skewed toward the youngsters.

DISNEY'S THE HAUNTED MANSION

Aimed at younger audiences, so it's neither terribly complicated or difficult, but when all's said and done it's simple and addictive. Well-rounded and worth a few hours of exploration.

DOWNHILL DOMINATION

Downhill Domination is a fine extreme racer that should appeal to all daredevil freaks.

DOG'S LIFE

This canine caper is an inspired look at the adventure genre that will keep you more entertained than a dog with four balls would be.

DROPSHIP: UNITED PEACE FORCE

Impressive combat sim that rewards commitment with paced and varied gameplay.

DYNASTY TACTICS 2

Dynasty Tactics 2 is purely one for the more masochistic strategy gurus. You know who you are.

DYNASTY WARRIORS 4: XTREME LEGENDS

Dynasty Warriors 4: Xtreme Legends is strictly one for the beat-'em-up fans. Just don't call it mindless.

ENDGAME

Sets a new standard in the lightgun shooter genre: innovative, refreshing and most of all, a tonne of fun.

ENTER THE MATRIX

Despite a painful lack of depth ETM is an enjoyable package for anyone after another dose of Matrix mayhem.

ESCAPE FROM MONKEY ISLAND

Adventure that includes smart visuals, witty script and intelligent puzzles.

ESPN NATIONAL HOCKEY NIGHT

Other hockey sims on the market with better gameplay put this in the sin bin.

ESPN NBA BASKETBALL

ESPN NBA Basketball slam dunks the competition with its slick presentation and innovative modes.

ESPN NFL FOOTBALL

If this game's quality was put into a local game, the results would be incredible. Until then, go for the stars and stripes.

ESPN NHL HOCKEY

A fast flowing game with plenty of depth. A no-brainer for hockey fans but a still a solid game for everyone else.

EVERQUEST ONLINE ADVENTURES

EverQuest Online Adventures offers rewards for the persistent, but it can be a pretty tough slog getting there.

EVIL TWIN

Adventure from the dark side of platforming. Average, so-so animation with 76 levels of twisted plot.

EXTERMINATION

Alien-inspired survival horror-fest that is set in a deserted Antarctic research base. Positively crawling with cool design innovations.

EXTREME-G 3

A neon beast of a future bike racer that requires skill and brains. Takes some 'inspiration' from the Wipeout series.

EYE TOY: PLAY

Forget the fact that it's marketed at casual gamers; give it a try, because when it comes to Eye Toy, seeing is believing.

EYE TOY: GROOVE

Groove is a victim of the diversity of its predecessor. The lack of variety offered by this dancing title undoubtedly narrows its appeal.

F1 CAREER CHALLENGE

At last, an F1 game that makes a priority of excitement and thrills over worthy but dull simulation.

FIFA FOOTBALL 2004

The best FIFA yet but it's miles behind PES3. It has all the bells and whistles, but the gameplay is still lacking.

FIGHT NIGHT 2004

If Fight Night 2004 were a boxer, it would quite rightly quip, "I am the greatest!"

FINAL FANTASY X

Nothing else needs to be said about this brilliant RPG. A classic Square adventure with next-gen presentation and production.

FINAL FANTASY X-2

FFX-2 is a huge, sprawling RPG adventure that is well worth the attention of even the most casual fan.

FORBIDDEN SIREN

This game belongs on the shelf of every survival horror buff. Hell - it belongs on every gamer's shelf.

FREEDOM FIGHTERS

Slight imperfections are swamped by an utterly addictive and clever game experience. You must play this.

FUTURAMA

With a bit more of polish this could have been shinier than Bender's metal ass.

FUR FIGHTERS

Cute fluffy creatures armed to the teeth with shotguns blast each other to pieces. The toy cupboard will never look innocent again.

GHOSTHUNTER

It doesn't quite live up to its (huge) potential but it's original, scary, exciting and well worth a look.

GHOST RECON

A squad-based first person shooter that suffers from a cumbersome interface for ordering troops about, often degenerating into arcade-style run-and-gun gaming.

GIANTS: CITIZEN KABUTO

The Reaper might be cool, but loading times hamper this port of a complex PC battle game.

GITAROO MAN

If you have a PS2 collection, you should definitely have at least one game like this one in there! Check it out.

GLOBAL TOURING CHALLENGE: AFRICA

An impressive racer that is further lifted by clever use of interesting locations.

GRAND THEFT AUTO 3

Not quite as good as its neon-soaked, '80s prequel but it's still fantastic fun and can now be found for bargain prices.

GRAND THEFT AUTO: VICE CITY

Better than GTA 3 cars, crooks, coke, and chaos with total freedom to do what you want. A must have for any gamer, serious or not.

GRAN TURISMO 3: A-SPEC

If you didn't know already, GT3 is the greatest racing game in the world. Speed down to the store and buy it now.

GRAN TURISMO CONCEPT: 2002 TOKYO-GENEVA

A more accessible version of GT3, with concept cars. Perfect for those who just want to race, rather than play mechanic.

GREGORY HORROR SHOW

A truly ghoulish treat for fans of the survival horror genre who fancy something a little different.

GUMBALL 3000

A decidedly crap racing title that fails to deliver on all fronts. Not something to bother with considering how many other decent racers are about.

G-SURFERS

Futuristic racer that's improved by an innovative track editor.

GUILTY GEAR X

Pushes hard at beat-'em-up boundaries. The start of a new wave of next-gen 2D fighters.

GUNGRAVE

Bizarre Manga inspired shooting game with gorgeous visuals, but a distinct lack of depth to back up all that eye candy.

GUN GRIFFON BLAZE

A mech shooter for robot obsessive-types everywhere.

TOP 5 LONGEST PS2 GAME TITLES



1. HEROES OF MIGHT AND MAGIC: QUEST FOR THE DRAGON BONE STAFF

Yeah, yeah, shut up already! Couldn't you just call it Heroes?

2. SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANTS: REVENGE OF THE FLYING DUTCHMAN

We like SpongeBob, so he's allowed to have a silly title.

3. RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN: OPERATION RESURRECTION

They went a bit overboard with the long words here.

4. CARMEN SANDIEGO: THE SECRET OF THE STOLEN DRUMS

Stolen drums? So what? We don't care!

5. THE LORD OF THE RINGS: THE FELLOWSHIP OF THE RING

Narrowly beat the other two LOTRs...

HALF-LIFE

The award-winning PC first-person shooter/adventure arrives on PS2 in resplendent form. An essential purchase.

HARRY POTTER AND THE CHAMBER OF SECRETS

Simple puzzles and gorgeous graphics make this a winner for younger fans of the books and films.

HARRY POTTER: QUIDDITCH WORLD CUP

Harry Potter: Quidditch World Cup is an entertainingly original title, but lacking in variety and challenge.

HITMAN 2: SILENT ASSASSIN

A disturbingly realistic take on living the life of a hired killer. Not one for the squeamish, but it contains brilliant gaming.

HUNTER: THE RECKONING WAYWARD

It lacks any real uniqueness but looks good and plays well enough to be forgiven.

INDIANA JONES & THE EMPEROR'S TOMB

High adventure 3D platform gaming let down by some unforgivable technical issues.

I-NINJA

While I-Ninja is packed with varied gameplay, its original elements are largely superfluous. Worth a rent though.

JAK II: RENEGADE

Darker and more challenging than its predecessor, Jak II is the best platform game we've ever seen!

JAK AND DAXTER: THE PRECURSOR LEGACY

A brilliant platformer from the makers of Crash Bandicoot that introduces two heroes you'll be seeing a lot more of.

JAMES BOND: EVERYTHING OR NOTHING

Looks and plays just like the films. Maybe a little too Metal Gear Solid-Lite but it's perfect popcorn action.

JUDGE DREDD: DREDD VS DEATH

A little lightweight but the multiplayer modes and arcade missions keep Dredd out of jail.

JURASSIC PARK: PROJECT GENESIS

A prehistoric premise, sure. But Operation Genesis puts a fresh spin on the God Sim genre. Hammond would be proud.

KENGO: MASTER OF BUSHIDO

A padded-out Training mode makes up for this smart ninja fighter's otherwise rather limited nature.

KELLY SLATER'S PRO SURFER

A bit too similar to Tony Hawk for our liking, but still the best surfing game around.

KILL SWITCH

As third-person shooters go, it's quite a lot of fun. Just don't go in expecting the next Splinter Cell.

KINGDOM HEARTS

A beautifully produced RPG with Disney and Square characters. Don't let the kiddie vibe fool you; this one's very tough.

KLONOA 2: LUNATA'S VEIL

Cute and cheerful platformer featuring the lovable glove-eared blue cat-rabbit hybrid. Fun stuff.

KNOCKOUT KINGS 2001

A more-than-competent boxing sim. Not a match for Rocky though.

KYA: DARK LINEAGE

A well-rounded platforming experience. Missing a few bells and whistles but very respectable fun.

LARGO WINCH

Based on a French comic character, this spy game is too linear, and lacks the interactivity that is needed to maintain a gamer's attention.

LEGACY OF KAIN: DEFIANCE

Legacy of Kain: Defiance is a fitting new chapter. Huge, bloody and pretty. Get ready to spill some blood.

LEGENDS OF WRESTLING

'Violent ballet' with a shortage of modes and options. There are much better recreations of Pro wrestling.

LE MANS 24 HOURS

Accessible for gamers daunted by sim-style vehicle handling, but has depth and thrills.



LORD OF THE RINGS: THE RETURN OF THE KING
★ OVERALL 09

Meaty button-mashing for the masses. Movie-to-game licenses are almost never this good. And it's a two-player game.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

MACE GRIFFIN: BOUNTY HUNTER
★ OVERALL 08

A hype-free, classy intermesh of different styles makes for one of the most compelling games of the year.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MADDEN NFL 2004
★ OVERALL 09

Not just for those who already love padding-up, this is a great game, whatever your tastes.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

MAFIA
OVERALL 07

Mafia is a slick title that could have been a classic if the driving sections weren't so dull. Close but no cigar.

MANHUNT
★ OVERALL 08

Manhunt is a solid, enjoyable stealth-em-up with utterly engaging gameplay. Not one for the kiddies, however.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MAX PAYNE 2: THE FALL OF MAX PAYNE
OVERALL 07

Horrendously long loading times and jerkiness spoil some of the best shootouts gaming has to offer.

MAXIMO VS ARMY OF ZIN
★ OVERALL 08

Much more accessible than its prequel, with an even more engaging plot.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MEDAL OF HONOR: RISING SUN
★ OVERALL 09

A game? A movie? MOH is a gruelling experience that packs the best of both worlds.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

METAL ARMS: GLITCH IN THE SYSTEM
★ OVERALL 08

If you love blowing stuff up then this will do more than whet your appetite for destruction.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SONS OF LIBERTY
★ OVERALL 10

A must-own, state-of-the-art tactical espionage game that's reason enough to buy a PS2. A superbly paced, gripping story.

GOLD
PlayStation 2

METAL GEAR SOLID 2: SUBSTANCE
★ OVERALL 08

Incredibly comprehensive Metal Gear package for newbies but MGS2 owners will struggle to find \$110's worth.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MICROMACHINES
★ OVERALL 08

Nothing particularly 'next-gen' about this instalment of the series, but an excellent racing diversion nonetheless.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MIDWAY'S ARCADE TREASURES
★ OVERALL 08

Beer Tapper alone is worth the \$40. Trust us, when this Beer touches your lips it tastes so good! A great retro collection.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MISSION: IMPOSSIBLE - OPERATION SURMA
★ OVERALL 08

Captures the stealthy stuff perfectly but ignores the other MI staples - car chases and hot chicks!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MOTO GP2
OVERALL 07

A refreshing bike racer. Slightly repetitive gameplay and a shallow multiplayer, but slick, fast and realistic. Excellent 3D graphics and race replay facility.

MOTO GP3
OVERALL 07

A little repetitive and far too similar to the last two games. Still, it's the best motorbike game on the system thus far.

MTX: MOTOTRAX
★ OVERALL 08

Despite a few disappointing features, MTX Mototrax is worth wearing some fluorescent leathers for.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

MUPPET PARTY CRUISE
OVERALL 07

All your favourite Muppets battling it out in a series of wacky multiplayer mini-games. Despite some problems, Muppet Party Cruise is still great fun to party with and worthy of an all-nighter.

MUSIC 3000
★ OVERALL 09

A mightily authoritative music title, which works as a fun diversion or a serious tool. Unmissable for wannabe bedroom artists.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

MX UNLEASHED
★ OVERALL 08

A must for petrol heads. Motocross games are heading in the right direction with MX Unleashed.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NBA 2K3
★ OVERALL 08

Not only realistic, but packed with plenty of features as well, offering a wide selection of game modes.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NBA LIVE 2004
★ OVERALL 08

Noticeable better than 2003, but how much more can EA cram into their sports games?

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NBA STREET VOLUME 2
★ OVERALL 09

A must-own for hoop fans and anyone looking for a solid multiplayer title.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

PSONE PLAYA

PSone games that are still worth the time of day



VIB RIBBON

Made entirely in black and white, you play a stick-figure rabbit called Vibri who has to walk along a line, avoiding obstacles simply by hitting the right button as you reach one. And that's it. That's the idea of the entire game. The smart thing, however, is that the obstacles you need to avoid appear in time to the music, so you must hit the buttons on the beat if you want to make it to the end of the tune safely. And if the selection of crazy squeaky Japanese music isn't enough, you can put any music CD you like into the game and it'll automatically generate a level based on your favourite tune. It looks simple, but can be insanely tough, as certain tunes cause obstacles to come at you almost impossibly quickly. A painting-based sequel called Mojib Ribbon is coming to PS2 sometime soon.

NEED FOR SPEED: HOT PURSUIT 2
★ OVERALL 08

A must-own for hoop fans and anyone looking for a solid multiplayer title.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NEED FOR SPEED: UNDERGROUND
★ OVERALL 09

Sexy, in A1 nick, goes like a greased rat up a drain pipe, ground shaking stereo, no previous owners. It's a steal.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

NFL 2K3
★ OVERALL 09

This is the game to own for anyone into American football thanks to its ultra-realistic graphics and gameplay.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

NFL STREET
★ OVERALL 08

Forget street cricket, NFL Street is so fun that it'll have kids playing it on the streets, yelling "go long".

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NHL 2K3
★ OVERALL 08

Excellent simulation settings for the die-hard fans, and plenty of arcade thrills for the rest of us.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NHL 2004
★ OVERALL 08

PS2's finest NHL romp. You'll enjoy this even if you think Wayne Gretzky is some kind of Polish Soup.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

NIGHTSHADE
OVERALL 07

Another hard and fast does of ninja action. It's perfect for anyone who's followed Shinobi from way back when.

ONI
OVERALL 07

New character animation in an enjoyable 3rd person sci-fi romp.

ONIMUSHA: WARLORDS
★ OVERALL 08

Impressive survival horror that lets the PlayStation 2 run riot. Does suffer from an iffy PAL conversion, though.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

OPERATION WINBACK
OVERALL 06

Lacks variety, but still an enjoyable stealth shooter, nevertheless.

ORPHEN
OVERALL 04

A disappointing anime-inspired Japanese RPG.

PARAPPA THE RAPPER 2
OVERALL 07

Rhythm action game from Japan in which you play a rapping dog. Simple but compelling gameplay. Short life span and only really worth revisiting for nostalgia.

PITFALL: THE LOST EXPEDITION
OVERALL 07

It's not going to dethrone any of the current champions in the genre, but it's good chilled-out fun for a while.

POLICE 24/7
OVERALL 05

Basic cop-shot light gun game with motion capture option. Frantic and fast but lacks structure and individuality. Just another on-rails shoot-em-up.

PRIDE FC
★ OVERALL 08

The new king of the ring! Pride FC is the most realistic fighting simulation available on any system to date. Great stuff!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

PRINCE OF PERSIA: SANDS OF TIME
★ OVERALL 09

Prince? More like the King. Ubi Soft has crafted one of the greatest PS2 adventure titles yet!

SILVER
PlayStation 2

PRISONER OF WAR
OVERALL 07

Escaping from POW camps is all well and good, but you remain a prisoner of often rigid game objectives. Even so, this is a bold, compelling adventure game.

PRO EVOLUTION SOCCER 3
★ OVERALL 09

If you know who Kewell is you must own this. The best soccer, sports and multiplayer game on your PS2.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

PROJECT EDEN
★ OVERALL 08

Look beyond some not-great visuals and you'll lose weeks to this complex and satisfying first-person shooter/adventure.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

PROJECT ZERO II: CRIMSON BUTTERFLY
★ OVERALL 09

Quite possibly the scariest game ever made, and it also plays superbly.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

QUAKE III
★ OVERALL 09

In four-player, this FPS is solid multiplayer fun. A technical tour de force, it runs smoothly and looks absolutely gorgeous.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RATCHET & CLANK
★ OVERALL 09

Pure platforming bliss from the company behind the original Spyro the Dragon titles on the PSone.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RATCHET & CLANK 2: LOCKED AND LOADED
★ OVERALL 09

Everything you could want in a sequel. It plays brilliantly and though it lacks innovation it's still a real charmer.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RAYMAN 3: HOODLUM HAVOC
OVERALL 07

Rayman offers plenty of 'armless fun but he's no match for Ratchets or Raccoons.

READY 2 RUMBLE: ROUND 2
OVERALL 07

A marvellous, arcade-based comedy boxing game, pitting ridiculous cartoon fighters against each other.

RED FACTION
★ OVERALL 08

Ace first-person shooter that melds MGS-style tactics and the all-out blasting of the hallowed Quake III.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RESIDENT EVIL CODE: VERONICA X
★ OVERALL 09

A captivating story, cinematic atmosphere, kinetic action, frights, thrills and copious amounts of blood-letting.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RETURN TO CASTLE WOLFENSTEIN
★ OVERALL 08

Only the high standards of the FPS competition prevent this from being a truly essential buy.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

REZ
★ OVERALL 09

Exploring the relationship between sound and colour this techno shooter provides pure gameplay. Unique, and refreshing.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

RIDGE RACER V
OVERALL 07

A popular racer, but high hopes were scuppered by the limited size and a lack of originality.

RISE TO HONOUR
OVERALL 07

This is as close as you can get to being Jet Li without spending a decade in a Shao Lin temple.

ROBOTECH: BATTLECRY
OVERALL 07

A cel-shaded shooter that brings the classic anime to life, but is held back by a decidedly clunky control system.

ROCKY
★ OVERALL 08

The best boxing title available for PS2. Has a great story mode that takes the player through the movies.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

R: RACING
OVERALL 07

Takes the Ridge Racer series to new, more realistic areas. A fine racer, but you'll get more bang for your buck elsewhere. We wonder if they'll stick with the new formula...

R-TYPE FINAL
OVERALL 07

An old-school shoot-em-up fan's dream, but inconsistent play won't win legions of new fans. Makes up for being a little short with oodles of challenge and copious amounts of unlockables.

RUGBY 2004
OVERALL 07

Covers the entirety of the sport well but fails to capture the true feel of it.

RUGBY LEAGUE
★ OVERALL 08

An entertaining game which neglected NRL fans can finally enjoy. Long-awaited, but very satisfying!

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

RUN LIKE HELL
OVERALL 07

A refreshing sci-fi survival horror title with a host of famous names handling the voice acting.

RYGAR: THE LEGENDARY ADVENTURE
OVERALL 07

This would make a fine and worthy addition to any action fan's game collection. Brevity is the only pain.

SERIOUS SAM: NEXT ENCOUNTER
OVERALL 07

Mindless violence at its golden best. Fast, frantic, action-packed, witty, gung-ho, nolsy, dumb blasting!

SHADOW OF MEMORIES
★ OVERALL 08

Filmic adventure that keeps the surprises coming with a serpentine plot.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SHINOBI
★ OVERALL 08

Shinobi is the kind of frantic, shallow, old school arcade game we don't see enough of anymore. A fast and bloody good time.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2

SILENT HILL 2
★ OVERALL 09

One of the most atmospheric and genuinely frightening titles on PS2. Like all of your worst nightmares rolled in to one game.

SILVER
PlayStation 2

SILENT HILL 3
★ OVERALL 09

The nastiest game on PlayStation 2 - we dare you to play it!

SILVER
PlayStation 2

SILENT SCOPE 2
OVERALL 07

A worthwhile update of this arcade sniper sim, though the formula is looking tired now.

SKY ODYSSEY
★ OVERALL 08

A flight sim where you don't have to shoot anything, just complete crazy missions.

BRONZE
PlayStation 2



SLED STORM OVERALL 06
A maxed-out, splashy remake of the PSone racing classic, very much in the SSX mould.

SMASH COURT TENNIS PRO TOURNAMENT OVERALL 07
Deep & stylish this game suffers from disproportionate leaps in difficulty that can be off-putting.

SMUGGLER'S RUN 2: HOSTILE TERRITORIES OVERALL 07
Impressively big, fast and frantic, but not much different to its predecessor.

SOCOM II: US NAVY SEALS ★ OVERALL 08
Finally! This is it! The online game we've all been waiting for!

SONIC HEROES OVERALL 07
Sonic Heroes is a solid platformer that pays homage to its classic routes but the ol' hedgehog has failed to evolve...

SOUL CALIBUR 2 ★ OVERALL 10
FINELY crafted gameplay, stunning visuals and a high level of polish make *SOUL* an essential purchase.

SPIDER-MAN OVERALL 07
It doesn't display huge innovations over its PSone counterpart, although it's a solid and enjoyable Spidey title either way.

SPHINX AND THE CURSED MUMMY OVERALL 07
If you're sick of characters crapping on and on in cut-scenes then this will be right up your alley.

SSX 3 ★ OVERALL 09
Delivers an avalanche of adrenalin rushing action, unlike any other snowboarding title out there.

STARSKY & HUTCH OVERALL 07
Given the lack of gameplay variety this cop caper shouldn't be as consistently enjoyable as it is.

STAR WARS: BOUNTY HUNTER OVERALL 07
Gorgeous to look at, taking the gamer into the Star Wars universe, but is let down by repetitive gameplay.

STAR WARS: CLONE WARS OVERALL 07
One for the Star Wars collectors, and a great battlefield in its own right. Shallow but still worth investigation.

STAR WARS: STARFIGHTER ★ OVERALL 09
Mesmerising 3D Star Wars blaster with engaging missions and film-perfect sound effects. Great fun.

STAR WARS: SUPER BOMBAD RACING OVERALL 05
Banal cartoon kart racer. The Force is weak with this one.

STATE OF EMERGENCY OVERALL 06
A shallow but worryingly enjoyable game that puts the player at the centre of a riot.

STREET FIGHTER EX3 OVERALL 06
A decent enough 2D/3D fighting game, but is milking the series to death. There are better 2D fighters from the same company.

STREET HOOPS OVERALL 06
More about collecting fancy duds than having a decent game of basketball, which is why this hoops title misses from the line.

STUNTMAN ★ OVERALL 08
Won't have the wide appeal of the *Driver* games due to its difficulty, but it's an ingenious concept that thrills and entertains.

SUMMER HEAT BEACH VOLLEYBALL OVERALL 07
The best crack at beach volleyball we've seen, but nothing to really set your gaming soul on fire.

SUMMONER 2 ★ OVERALL 08
Follow-up to the RPG launch title. More action orientated than the original, but still an epic adventure for fans of fantasy.

SUPERCAR STREET CHALLENGE OVERALL 04
A by-the-book arcade racing game round desolate cities. Nothing to recommend it.

SWORD OF THE SAMURAI OVERALL 07
Sword of the Samurai is a slow, ponderous, but intelligent game that combines strategy with gore.

TARZAN FREERIDE OVERALL 04
Based on a Disney film of the same name, this tries to be different with 'surfing' tree branches, but it doesn't work.

TEKKEN TAG TOURNAMENT ★ OVERALL 08
Fantastically playable and graphically spectacular beat-'em-up. The tagging moves make it a worthwhile purchase.

TEKKEN 4 ★ OVERALL 09
Continuing the tradition of fighting game excellence. The first Tekken game to include free-movement.

TENCHU: WRATH OF HEAVEN ★ OVERALL 08
An infusion of ninja style and killer gameplay across nine sumptuous levels. A great return to form for a classic title.

TERMINATOR 3: RISE OF THE MACHINES OVERALL 06
Like *Amie*, this game is a likeable dinosaur. Big guns and explosions but last-generation gameplay.

THE GETAWAY ★ OVERALL 09
Sony's answer to *Grand Theft Auto*, with a decidedly darker and nastier storyline. Offers an amazingly life-like replica of London.

THE HOBBIT OVERALL 07
The Hobbit is a game devoid of challenge and originality, and strictly for the younger Tolkien fans.

THE HULK OVERALL 07
Not a smash-hit; but not damaged goods either. An enjoyable beat 'em' up; shame about those stealth sections though.

THE SIMPSONS: HIT & RUN ★ OVERALL 08
Combine the show's best elements with the best of *GTA* and you've got an instant, charming winner.

THE SIMPSONS: ROAD RAGE OVERALL 06
It's *Crazy Taxi* but with Bart and Homer behind the wheel.

THE SIMS: BUSTIN' OUT ★ OVERALL 08
Bustin' Out is slicker than the last game but without enough gameplay enhancements to make it essential.

THE SUFFERING ★ OVERALL 08
Fans of action and/or horror should definitely NOT miss this one. It's an adventure you won't forget in a hurry.

THE THING ★ OVERALL 08
Not only does it do justice to the classic horror film, but also introduces fear and trust issues to the survival-horror genre.

THEME PARK WORLD OVERALL 07
Take on the role of a theme park tycoon for a day in this engaging god sim, where pleasing the crowds and getting those turnstiles a-spinning! Is your prime directive.

THIS IS SOCCER 2004 OVERALL 07
The pros outweigh the cons but the cons are annoying. TIS is not as good as *Pro Evo 3*, but it's certainly closing in.

THUNDERHAWK: OPERATION PHOENIX OVERALL 07
A brave attempt to blend arcade and sim with choppers.

TIGER WOODS PGA TOUR 2004 ★ OVERALL 08
The best golf game on PS2, but we're holding our breath for next year's online version.

TIME CRISIS 3 ★ OVERALL 08
Action-packed arcade bullet-fest with plenty of lure for the casual player. Very similar to *Time Crisis 2* though.

TIMESPLITTERS 2 ★ OVERALL 10
Takes the multiplayer from *TimeSplitters* and adds heaps of options. Major visual upgrades, i-Link for 16-player games – the works!

TOM CLANCY'S GHOST RECON: JUNGLE STORM ★ OVERALL 08
As a budget-priced tactical shooter, *Jungle Storm* is an absolute bargain. Spend the savings on face paint.

TOM CLANCY'S RAINBOW SIX 3 OVERALL 07
It falls short of being brilliant. If only it had gone that extra mile. Fingers crossed for next time.

TOM CLANCY'S SPLINTER CELL ★ OVERALL 10
Move over Snake, Sam's the new special agent in town! *Splinter Cell* is an innovative game with some very cool touches.

TOMB RAIDER: THE ANGEL OF DARKNESS ★ OVERALL 08
A little on the slow side but there's no doubting Lara's appeal. The original superstar is back!

TONY HAWK'S UNDERGROUND ★ OVERALL 09
Neversoft has turned the Hawk series into a Vice City-style adventure. And they've lost none of the charm doing it.

TOP 5 RETRO GAMING PS2 TITLES



1. MIDWAY ARCADE TREASURES

Contains all-time arcade legends, such as *Defender*, *Gauntlet* and *Paperboy*, plus lesser-known gems like *Root Beer Tapper*.

2. HYPER STREET FIGHTER II

Five versions of the classic fighter mixed into one slightly disappointing game.

3. ACTIVISION ANTHOLOGY

Loads of crappy-looking Atari 2600 games, some of which are great fun.

4. SPACE INVADERS ANNIVERSARY

It may be super-basic, but it's also super-skilful.

5. PRINCE OF PERSIA

The excellent original game is hidden in *Sands Of Time*.

TRANSFORMERS ★ OVERALL 09
Intense battles, giant bosses, sweet graphics and over-the-top action! A superb fix for the shooter addicts.

TRUE CRIME: STREETS OF LA ★ OVERALL 08
A solid shooter that takes *GTA's* ideas and improves many of them, but loses something along the way.

TUROK: EVOLUTION OVERALL 06
Boasts a wicked line-up of weapons and a variety of gaming styles, but suffers from crappy AI and frame rate issues.

TWISTED METAL: BLACK ★ OVERALL 08
This is everything that you'd expect a *Twisted Metal* game to be on PS2 – and then some.

UNLIMITED SAGA OVERALL 07
If you've never played a Sogo game, this will be unfamiliar and unspectacular but very challenging.

UNREAL TOURNAMENT ★ OVERALL 08
Totally over-the-top first-person shooter. Makes for a nice alternative to *Quake III*, but is outclassed totally by *TimeSplitters 2*.

URBAN FREESTYLE SOCCER OVERALL 07
UFS is not worth pulling your shirt over your head for, but given a chance it's worth a run.

V-RALLY 3 ★ OVERALL 08
Not as instantly playable as *WRC II Extreme* or *Colin McRae Rally 3* but effort pays off with some very satisfying racing.

V8 SUPERCAR RACE DRIVER ★ OVERALL 09
Real damage. Real V8s. Real Aussie tracks. Real fun. The best racing game seen so far on the PlayStation 2!

VAMPIRE NIGHT ★ OVERALL 08
A vampire-blasting light gun extravaganza that looks great but has questionable replay value once the bad boys are all put to rest.

VIRTUA FIGHTER 4 EVOLUTION ★ OVERALL 08
Packed with things to do, VF4 still lacks the outright fun that makes *Soul Calibur* a game for everyone.

VIRTUA TENNIS 2 ★ OVERALL 08
Far and away the best Tennis simulation to grace the PS2. The World Circuit mode provides an awesome long term challenge.

WAKEBOARDING UNLEASHED ★ OVERALL 08
It may be a little wet behind the ears but *Unleashed* has just as many thrills as its extreme brothers.

WAR OF THE MONSTERS OVERALL 07
War of the Monsters is a big, brash game that explodes with charm and burns brightly... but not for very long.

WARHAMMER 40,000: FIRE WARRIOR OVERALL 07
A decent FPS with good controls and an interesting story but it doesn't bring anything new to the tabletop.

WHIPLASH OVERALL 07
A great sense of humour and warped characters save *Whiplash* from obscurity as a platformer.

WIPEOUT FUSION ★ OVERALL 09
Style and substance are here in the most fully realised *Wipeout* yet. This future racer is as smart and extreme as it gets.

WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP RUGBY ★ OVERALL 08
A hard-hitting game that encapsulates everything about the sport. The best Union title available at the moment.

WORMS 3D OVERALL 07
Drooling Worms fanatics – you know who you are – will grab this in a flash but anyone who drinks their tequila without the little wriggly guys will want to wait for *Worms 3D 2*.

WRC 3 ★ OVERALL 09
An improvement over its esteemed predecessor, *WRC 3* races neck and neck with *McRae 04* for rally glory.

WWE SMACKDOWN! HERE COMES THE PAIN! ★ OVERALL 09
The best there is, the best there was, and the best there ever shall be... until the next *SmackDown!*

XIII ★ OVERALL 09
XIII takes the creaky old FPS and adds fresh style to make it a very worthy purchase.

X-MEN 2: WOLVERINE'S REVENGE ★ OVERALL 08
A quality action adventure that blends stealth with hand-to-hand combat. Only a few irritations deny it a higher score.

INSIDE GAMING

OPS2 sneaks onto the set for the scoop on *Starcraft*'s delay

THE GAME

Considering production on *Starcraft: Ghost* has already been dragging on for over two years, few were surprised when Vivendi recently announced that the sci-fi action blockbuster would not hit screens until early 2005. The game's director has a reputation as being a perfectionist and most simply assumed the game was being delayed for further fine-tuning. Not convinced though, we had a snoop around the set and managed to snap a photo of a heavily pregnant Nova. Considering she plays an acrobatic assassin it's no wonder her pregnancy has delayed the project so much. All of the action scenes would need to be postponed for at least six months, leaving Nova with nothing but dialogue cut-scenes to do.

THE SHOCK PREGNANCY

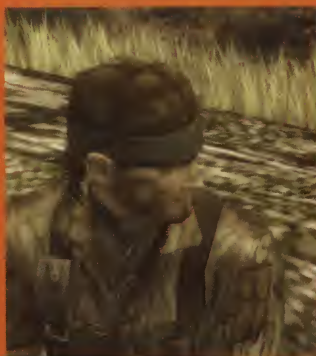
Nova's last public romance was with one of the extras on the set – a lowly Terran Mech soldier. Things turned ugly when the extra began blackmailing her by threatening to release raunchy polaroids taken during their Fiji getaway. Since then, Nova has been intensely guarded about her private life.

When we contacted Vivendi about the pregnancy a company spokesman said "Rumours of Nova's pregnancy are totally unfounded. It's true she put on a couple of pounds during an unfortunate binge eating incident, but we've hired The Rock as her personal trainer and we're confident she'll be back in shape in time to get the game finished before Christmas."



WHO'S YOUR DADDY?

Ever since news of Nova's pregnancy leaked out of Hollywood, rumours of possible fathers have been spreading faster than that unfortunate case of herpes Buffy caught last month. After doing a little digging we realised Nova's been a very busy girl. Her bedroom exploits are second only to Tekken's Nina. Here are just some of her recent lovers.



The don't call him 'Solid Snake' for nothing. There was a bit of 'rumbling' in the jungle going on while the pair were shooting scenes for their own games in the Amazon.



Reportedly 'on a break' from long-time flame Candy Suxxx, Tommy was seen disappearing into the bushes with Nova at an exclusive Hollywood party.



Agent 47 is a smooth operator. He 'hit' on her while she was depressed after the Vercetti break-up. He has since refused to return her phone calls.



After a string of bad relationships with the blokes, Nova was spotted with prominent ladies' girl Lara Croft at an Invitro Fertilisation Centre in West Hollywood.

SYPHON FILTER: OMEGA STRAIN

After a slight delay Gabe steps up for the OPS2 review!

FIRST REVIEW



NEXT MONTH

ONIMUSHA 3

Exclusive review of this demon-slaying epic!

JAK & RATCHET 3

We go hands-on with the platformers of the year!

10 NEW DEMOS

Alias, Champions of Norrath, Megaman X7 and more!

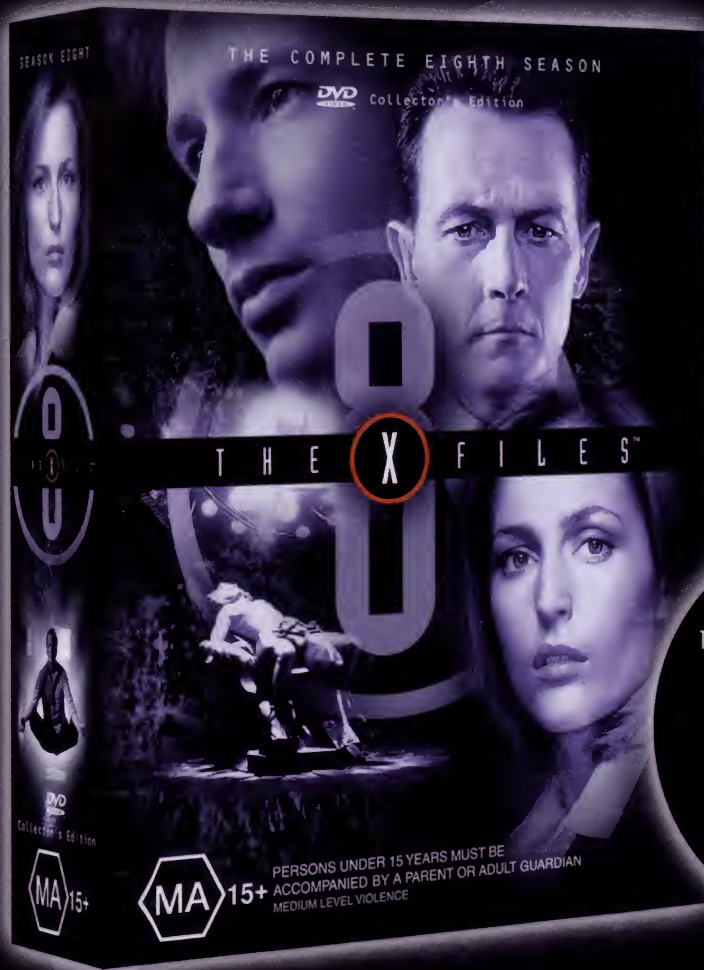


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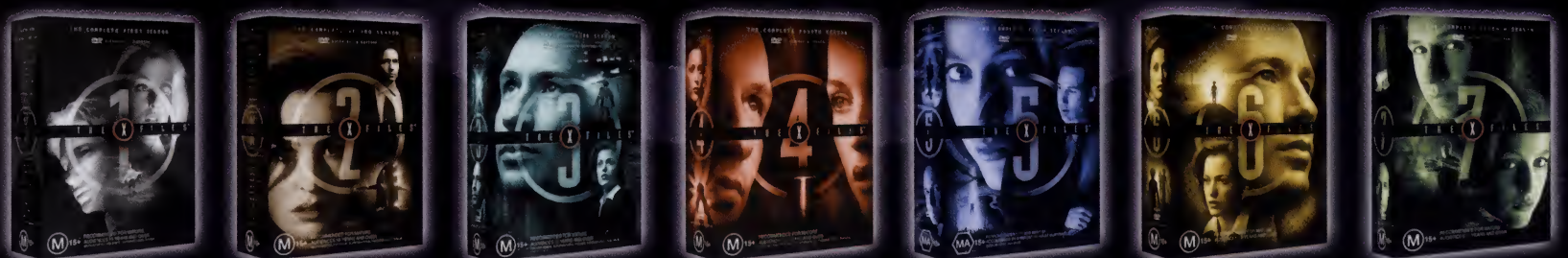


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